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WILLIAM LANGSHAWE,

THE COTTON LORD.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
Printed by S. & J. Bentley, Wilson, and Fley,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

WILLIAM LANGSHAWE,

THE

COTTON LORD.

BY MRS. STONE,

AUTHORESS OF "THE ART OF NEEDLEWORK."

"Of manufactures, trade, inventions rare,
Steam towers and looms."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1842.

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TO JOHN WHEELER, ESQUIRE,

LATE PROPRIETOR OF

"THE MANCHESTER CHRONICLE,"

WHOSE ARDUOUS CAREER AS A PUBLIC JOURNALIST

CONTINUED THROUGH A LONG COURSE OF YEARS,

AND DURING MANY TROUBLOUS TIMES,

WAS INVARIABLY DISTINGUISHED

BY

INTEGRITY, TALENT, AND COURTESY,

THIS WORK IS INSCRIBED

BY

HIS DAUGHTER.

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WILLIAM LANGSHAWE,

THE COTTON LORD.

INTRODUCTION.

The scene of our tale lies in the manufacturing districts.

Cotton bags, cotton mills, spinning-jennies, power-looms and steam-engines; smoking chimneys, odious factories, vulgar proprietors, and their still more vulgar wives, and their superlatively-vulgar pretensions; dense population, filthy streets, drunken men, reckless women, immoral girls, and squalid children; dirt, filth, misery, and crime;—such are the interesting images which rise, "a busy throng to crowd the brain," at the bare mention of the "manu-

facturing districts:" vulgarity and vice walking side by side; ostentatious extravagance on the one hand, battening on the miseries of degraded and suffering humanity on the other; and this almost without redeeming circumstances—we are told. Is it so?

Lancashire, though it has many beautiful and interesting relics of antiquity, is yet not so rich in memorials of the "olden time" as several of the more southern counties. It was a district of considerable importance in the time of the Romans, fragments of whose works in many parts of the county still attest the high importance which these polished intruders attributed to the location; but for many centuries after their departure Lancashire was little heard of, little known, and in the statistical records of the country was scarcely, if at all, mentioned. In many of the southern counties, peculiar costumes and antiquated customs present themselves on every hand, and would give the idea of habits trans-

mitted through many generations, even if tradition and history did not attest the fact. In Lancashire this is not the case; and the general tone of custom throughout the county evidences that it was not thickly populated until a comparatively modern date. It gave, indeed, "titles to nobles, and sovereigns to the throne;" it possessed several valuable and beautiful ecclesiastical buildings, relics which —alas! that they should be but relics—still hallow the soil: it was the site of some magnificent feudal castles which were the favourite residences of barons and nobles, the loftiest and noblest of the land, distinguished for munificence, far famed for hospitality, for manly exercises, and for comely persons; but its aspect generally was wild, its population thinly scattered, its estimation among other counties of England, low. Perhaps the settlement here of the Flemings in the fourteenth century was the first step towards that commercial importance which has raised Lancashire to so elevated a rank in the country;

and, through her commercial intercourse, to so important a position with regard to the world at large.

Lancashire is a county possessing many natural beauties. Its eastern and northern fronts are bounded by lofty hills, from whose steep summits the eye may sweep over varied and beautiful scenery till it dimly glances toward the ocean waves which lave the western shore, and, freighted with life, and health, and wealth, wing their gladsome way to the spacious and ready ports. Tracks of moorland, bleak and barren, stretch abroad in striking contrast to rich and verdant plains; and if such wild and desolate districts as Pendle Forest, and some few others, the unhallowed haunts of witches and their fearful associates in days of old, cast a shade of reproach on the county, the stigma is abundantly done away by the pleasant contemplation of those gentle and sunny vales which have rejoiced in a happier and holier fame. Such, more especially, was the wide-spreading and fertile tract between the Ribble and Mersey, to which

an appellation no less honourable than "Christ's Croft" was appropriated.

> "When all Englande is alofte,
> Hale are they that are in Christis Crofte;
> And where should Christis Crofte be
> But between Ribble and Mersey."

The wooded cloughs and bosky dells of Lancashire are features almost peculiar to itself. They are very small (which circumstance is indeed a characteristic feature), but surpassingly beautiful, abruptly and unexpectedly breaking the uniformity of the general surface, and suddenly immerging the unaccustomed traveller in secluded spots which fairies would love to haunt, or hamadryads would choose to hold their revels in. The sudden and tiny ravine—too precipitous to be perfectly easy in descent, but too inviting to be passed aside from—is thickly shrouded in trees, among which the foliage of the ash and the oak shines most conspicuously. But the hazel hangs its tempting clusters over the brisk sparkling stream that frequently ripples below; the honeysuckle gleams amid the dark

foliage; the ivy wreathes its verdant shroud round many an aged trunk; the magnificent foxglove glows amid the fern, while the timid harebell droops beautiful at its side; and well do we know where the earthnut grows the sweetest, the wild strawberry blooms the ruddiest, or the autumn blackberry—that "berry of such old renown"—offers most temptingly its juicy fruit.

Lancashire's sparkling rivers flow with life and spirit through jutting banks and lofty crags, which, without having much of magnificence, are yet, with the branching trees which now tower aloft and anon sweep over the water, and the clustering foliage which covers the banks, save where some jutting crag obtrudes its rugged front, sufficiently varied to present a succession of rich and beautiful landscapes. These are frequently completed by a range of far-off hills, which rise softened in the distance, or, more beautifully, by an ancient church towering on a gentle eminence; while its heavenward spire

— fitting emblem of that hope which rests for ever in the skies—gleams like molten gold in the sunshine; while ever and anon a velvet lawn sweeps to the water's edge, giving to view a time-honoured mansion, flanked by its guardian oaks.

Such, in its natural features is, or rather was, Lancashire. "God made the country;" but the town — and Lancashire bids fair to be one day a continuous mass of building— man made that. So rapid, so sweeping, has been the progress of the manufacturer, that the time seems but too likely to arrive when it will be difficult to select a spot uncontaminated by his finger. Immense manufactories seem to spring up everywhere. The most beautiful retreats are the most likely to be infested, because they generally offer that *sine quâ non* of the manufacturer, a running stream. And wherever one of these unsightly buildings is raised, its natural and necessary concomitants, crepant noises, frightful chimneys belching volumes of smoke, black, noi-

some, and destructive, on all around; a low, a numerous, and, in many instances, a degraded population is speedily congregated.

Another circumstance emanating from its own innate wealth has likewise contributed much to disfigure the fair face of Lancashire. The coal strata are numerous, good, and incalculably valuable, whether considered merely in regard to the comforts of domestic life, affording to the poor, almost the poorest artizan, the luxury of a glowing hearth, or in reference to that manufacturing prosperity of which these inexhaustible mines are very sinews and supports. But the working of them necessarily must and does deface the appearance of the country in which the seams prevail.

To the list of acquired outward disfigurements we may add the railroads, which now extending their branching arms cancerwise over the whole country, originated in Lancashire, where they run in various directions, and have been proved of the highest commercial utility.

It is hardly to be wondered at that the hasty

tourist should now represent Lancashire as the reverse of *picturesque*.

In contradistinction to these, tastefully speaking, disparaging circumstances, Lancashire boasts herself the heart and life of that commerce for which England is renowned; she presents an enormous mass of industrious population, possessed of more than an average share of talent, and, in proportion to its immensity, not disfigured by a more than average share of licentiousness or crime. The "hot-beds of vice," the manufactories, are, perhaps, not more redolent of crime—in proportion to the numbers congregated—than are the potato-tracts and harvest-fields in those counties where a great proportion of out-door work is still done by females, and where the first barrier of womanly delicacy is destroyed by young girls, when equipped for field labour, being dressed—necessarily, perhaps, but still it is so—in garments of a shape and form quite the reverse of feminine. In the agricultural counties young children have the inestimable advantage of roving in the free air of heaven

till their limbs are strong and their bodies vigorous and healthy. In the manufacturing districts the price heretofore put on their little fingers has been a strong temptation to parents to deprive them of that liberty which was their free-born heritage. But with regard to the simple question of the morality of the manufacturing districts as compared with the agricultural, there is perhaps less difference than is generally imagined; and that difference—always bearing in mind the immense disproportion in numbers — is somewhat in favour of the former.*

The natives of Lancashire are not only, as a body, remarkably intelligent, but they are noted for a very extraordinary degree of natural musical talent. This is, among many even of the lowest, improved by cultivation and practice. The Lancashire chorus-singers have long been celebrated; the hand-bell

* Some experience, both in a manufacturing town and a secluded agricultural county, has led us to form this opinion, which, however, we should scarcely have obtruded here, but that, as we believe, the statistical records bear us out.

ringers make musical the air with the most softened and touching, as well as the most merry tunes on their annual peregrinations; many a village has its glee club; the Sunday peal is rung forth from the tower of the country church not only merrily, but most melodiously; and the singing itself in most of those churches, is such as might put to shame the badly-executed chants of many metropolitan fanes.

The people (natives) of Lancashire have been gifted by nature with tall and well-proportioned bodies, and with intelligent minds; and the pursuits of the county are such as to excite, not repress, the aspirings of an inquiring intellect.

CHAPTER I.

THE HEROINE.

" But if we judge by either words or looks,
Her mode of life, her morals, or her books,
Her pure devotion, unaffected sense,
Her placid air, her mild benevolence,
Her gay good humour, and her manners free,
She is as happy as a maid can be."

CRABBE.

" These and the tasks successive masters brought—
The French they conn'd, the curious works they wrought,
The hours they made their taper fingers strike
Note after note, all dull to them alike;
Their drawings, dancings on appointed days,
Playing with globes, and getting parts of plays—"

Ibid.

MR. AND MRS. LANGSHAWE lived in the manufacturing districts. He was a cotton-man, and——

" A cotton-man! the manufacturing districts!"—what a host of unpoetical, unro-

mantic associations does the very term excite in the mind, vapoury and wearisome as was the lengthened and unwelcome vision of Banquo's descendants to the aching eye of Macbeth!

"The manufacturing districts!"—"A cotton-man!" exclaims some *parvenue*, when she opens her monthly importation of novels, and glances over the first page of each—"What can Hookham have been thinking of to send this? it must go back immediately."

"But," remarks a companion, "you desire him to send everything that comes out."

"Certainly, everything *readable*, but who who can read this?"

"Marvellous!" exclaims the Marchioness of X—, when her monthly importation of fashionable literature also arrives, "Here 's a book about the 'Manufacturing Districts!' that may go in the returning box at once."

"What sort of a book is it?" says her lord.

"What sort? why, a novel, to be sure."

"Oh, capital: there 'll be some fun in

that;—the Cotton-bags enacting the sentimental!"

"Sentiment! what sentiment is it within the limits of possibility to infuse into smoking chimneys and cotton bags?"

"We will see. Don't send it back."

And so my book, having by the lucky whim of a peer, fairly found its way into the recesses of an aristocratic boudoir, it will be a sad want of taste in you "courteous reader," whomsoever you may be, not to follow the example thus *nobly* set you, and to patronise the plebeian publication.

Mr. and Mrs. Langshawe lived in the heart of the manufacturing districts, in a beautiful house a few miles from Manchester. The windows overlooked a pleasure-ground well arranged in lawn and parterre, kept in the most exquisite order, and exhibiting all the approved rarities of shrub or flower; and skirting this garden were conservatories and

forcing-houses, which would not have disgraced the mansion of a peer. At the distance perhaps of half a mile, was a clustering mass of cottage buildings; and close to it one of the unsightly erections peculiar to the district raised its cumbrous form. Various detached residences were scattered at intervals around; a handsome, but somewhat staring new church, crowned a small eminence; meadow and woodland, interspersed with red brick buildings of various forms and qualities, but most chiefly of the unsightly kind appertaining to manufactures, spread over a considerable tract of interesting country, which now swelled into gentle eminences, now sunk in wooded dells, while at intervals the sunbeam sparkled on a rippling brook or rapid-flowing river; and the whole was bounded by a range of hills. These, indeed, almost encircle this particular district, and by intercepting the clouds in their course, are no doubt one cause of the abundance of rain, for which it is remarkable, and which has procured for it, though

somewhat unfairly, the distinctive appellation of "the watering-pot of England."

The lord and lady of the mansion were lounging in an elegantly-furnished boudoir during that idle hour which precedes the pleasant labours of the toilette. The repose was peculiarly grateful to the lady, as she had been busily engrossed in the very active superintendence of culinary preparations for the entertainment of a dinner party, and the gentleman had but just returned from town. He, with untied knees and slippers on, had disposed his somewhat lumbering limbs on a lounging-chair near a rich ottoman on which his lady had bounced. Certainly the appearance and manners of this worthy couple were hardly in unison with the elegancies amid which they reposed. Mrs. Langshawe had the appearance of an over-fed well-dressed housekeeper; her manners were somewhat boisterous, her countenance was decidedly vulgar, but relieved by an expression of such winning good temper, that it was, after all,

impossible to look in her face without admiring her. Mr. Langshawe's enunciation was even less polished than his lady's, but his accents were softer; his physiognomy was also of a superior stamp: it was not exactly (to use a very hackneyed word) what is now called intellectual, but there was shrewd penetration written in every line of it, and especially in the muscles which contracted round a dark grey eye, whose beams seemed to pierce all which they looked upon.

The door opened and their only daughter entered, who, in answer to her father's inquiry, said that she had been to see William Bladow.

"What, the mad hermit?"

"Yes, papa."

"You are very fond of his company of late, Edith."

"Not of late only, papa; you know I have known him ever since I was a child."

"And what art thou now, Edith?"

"Why, my dear father, *your* child of

course; but not a child to any one else, I expect"—and the young lady bridled up a little.

"Well, well, Edith, mind what you're about, that's all; I've given you every advantage of education, all the accomplishments that money could purchase, and all the comforts that kindness could bestow; and on the day you're married, Edith, I'll give you fifty thousand pounds down—down, girl, down—and mayhap more than that when your mother and I are carried to the churchyard, provided—*pro-vid-ed* you marry to please me. I've earned all my money by the sweat of my brow; I don't care who knows it; I began the world an errand-boy, and not a shilling of what I've so hardly gained shall go to pamper any idle gentleman or fashionable spendthrift: so mind what you're about."

"Indeed, papa, I've not the slightest predilection for any idle gentleman at present, except it be yourself, sir."

"Well, well, we shall see; but I fancy

young Frank Walmsley flutters about you a good deal of late."

"Nothing of the sort, sir, (but a blush rather belied the words,) and as to being idle, you know he has only just returned from college, and has not occasion to exert himself, he has such good expectations from his uncle."

"Expectations from his fiddle-stick— don't tell me of any young man's *expectations.* I like something solid. His uncle may marry, or his uncle may die and leave his money away, or he may lose it before he dies, as many a warmer man has done. Show me a young man with his business in his fingers, a clear head, a calculating mind, and industrious, frugal, hardworking habits — there 's solidity in such a character as that—and on such a one, if he had not a guinea in his purse nor a second coat to his back, I would not look askance. This, Edith, made your father rich; but such as this Frank Walmsley — though he 's a good youth too — but such as this he will never be."

Edith's eyes suffused, but she did not reply; and the trio separated to dress.

And we will look at our heroine as she reappeared in a gossamer robe of spotless white; her only decoration a damask rose-bud wreathed in the braids of her dark hair; her only jewellery a small chain from which was suspended a locket containing her father's and mother's hair entwined.

She was a sweet-looking creature, and it was easy to trace a resemblance to both her parents in the soft lineaments of her face. The beaming good-temper was her mother's, as was the curled and rosy lip, and the straight and well-formed nose: the dark eye also was her mother's, but its flashing beam claimed kindred with her father's, as the broad and intelligent forehead also proclaimed their near relationship, and the animated intelligence that shone in every feature was his softened reflex. Her cheek was glowing with rosy health, and—

"Shocking!" exclaim my lady readers; "a dairy-maid sylph!—a rosy-cheeked heroine!"

And even my condescending Marchioness exclaims, as she lays down the book, "This is too bad!"

Dear lady! condescend, I pray you, to recollect that our scene lies not amongst the *arist*—but the *cotton*-ocracy.

Have patience, my fair readers, have patience. My Edith deserves a little grace at your hands. She is not pale; she is not sentimental; but she is fair, and feminine, and gentle, and generous, and good. Fear not but her trials will come; fear not but her cheek will be pale. Woman's lot is on her, and she will yet be proved by suffering. Faith and patience — undeviating faith, unwearying patience—constancy, which is neither corrupted by prosperity nor overcome by adversity; vigils, tearful perhaps, but uncomplaining — to hope against hope — to trust, and though betrayed, still to trust again; this is woman's heritage. The plant is nurtured in earthly soil; it shall bear fruit in heaven.

But not yet: youthful, healthful, beautiful,

and gay, Miss Langshawe moved like a being of a brighter world. Her eye was yet undimmed by grief, her cheek unblanched by sorrow, her brow unwrinkled by care. The idol of her parents, the darling of all around, loved and courted, flattered and caressed, the world was as yet to her but a long day-dream of joy; she lived in a fairy land of hope and happiness. Ere long must she awake to the painful realities of life, to the withered hope, the blighting care, the fleeting joy, the lingering sorrow — a weary train! But there is energy in her lofty brow to combat—there is patience in her meek face to endure; there is hope enwreathed in every magic line of her sweet countenance. There shine "pure thoughts, kind thoughts, high thoughts." A mortal she is, and the trials of mortality she must endure; a spirit she is, and a spirit for immortality is perfected by the trials of time.

Reader! will she not do for a heroine?

And how is it that Miss Langshawe is of so superior a stamp to her parents? The

circumstance is easily accounted for, and is no uncommon feature in Lancashire society, where the rising generation enjoy advantages to which their parents had no access.

Without any wish himself to acquire the conventional rules of polished life, nay, with even something of contempt for them, Mr. Langshawe was fully aware of his own deficiencies in that respect. Besides the proud desire, natural to a father, to see his offspring distinguished, especially when that offspring is limited to one darling child, the future heiress of a considerable fortune, he felt that the doting indulgence of her mother was as little likely to regulate the temper and disposition of his daughter to good, as her habits were to mould her to gentility. Mr. Langshawe dearly loved and respected his wife, and he had every cause to do so; but she was of an origin even lower than his own, and had not the shrewd discernment and natural talent which in himself abated the disadvantages resulting from the want of early education. She was an affectionate wife, a doting mother, a

kind mistress to her servants, a generous benefactress to the poor, and her manners were *in some degree* polished by society, and by constant intercourse with others; but the calibre of her mind was precisely of its original dimensions. Mr. Langshawe early saw in Edith indications of quick intelligence not uncombined with symptoms of strong resolution. He saw materials from which might be formed an admirable character, but he judged, and in this he judged most truly, that they would require the moulding of a master-hand. This he determined his daughter should have. He long hesitated in his choice; but when once made it was unaltered: and "do not make my girl a fine lady" was his earnest parting injunction to Mrs. Maitland.

This lady was well qualified for the important charge which the fond father committed to her keeping. The excellent and really accomplished wife of a clergyman, she was but too happy to aid by her exertions that income which high talent and character on his part did not suffice to render suffi-

cient. Under her judicious and affectionate care, Edith Langshawe was habituated to think like a responsible being, and to behave like a gentlewoman. In Mr. Maitland's household she saw the good effects of prudent superintendence; and in the devoted esteem and affection of his poor parishioners the happy results of judicious and discriminating charity. The worthlessness of accomplishments as the great end and aim of education was strongly inculcated; but under proper limitation, and in rigid subjection to more valuable pursuits, they were sedulously cultivated as an ornament to gay, and a refuge in solitary hours. Edith had an affectionate heart and quick talents: she was an apt pupil in all that was good.

Mr. Langshawe had heroically withstood the pleadings of her mother and the yearnings of his own heart, and from the age of nine years had permitted only short and far-between visits from his darling child. At seventeen she returned to him, and the father was richly rewarded for his self-denial:

he had sown the good seed, he now reaped the plenteous harvest. For two years Edith's bright face had gladdened his fireside, and her unpretending but gentle, assiduous attentions to him and her mother had cast a gleam of indescribable comfort over him and his whole household. She was beloved by them all.

In no circumstance of his life did Mr. Langshawe show more discriminating judgment than in the style in which he chose to have his daughter educated. A modern fashionable education seems to be the perversion of everything reasonable, at least for the middle classes of society. It would be an amusing occupation to trace the changes and gradations in the style of these things even for only a century past. It is very little more since in "the metropolis of the North," Manchester, there was a Pastry School, which was frequented not only by the daughters of the townspeople, but by those also of the neighbouring gentlemen; and there was about the same time a dancing-

master, who on certain occasions used to make his pupils, boys and girls—of the then most respectable families — parade two and two through the principal streets.

We have heard a lady of a later generation say, that at the boarding-school where she was placed for education, the pupils during their *last year* were taught to make pastry and shape garments; and were initiated into some other of the lighter mysteries of housekeeping: the elder ones also took it in turn to accompany their governess on her tea-visits; where, with elbows pushed back, and bodies bolt upright, pokerwise, they sipped their thimblefuls of bohea, and learnt how "to behave discreetly" in company. A generation later these customs were abolished, and we were supposed to be ignorant (and by tacit agreement we each concealed our *home*-acquired knowledge of the fact) that ladies' fingers *could* contaminate themselves by compounding mixtures of butter and flour and suet; and as to shaping and seaming such garments as from their universal adoption

we may fairly suppose to be most useful—this was never dreamt of. *Plain sewing was forbidden by the rules of the school.* Now, if this had been a school—if there be such an one—for duchesses, countesses, and baronesses in embryo, all might have been very well; but it was one specifically for the middle classes; the parents were all tradesmen; and though the pupils might be spoiled children in their parents' houses, they had no prospect but of being necessarily active housekeepers in their own. Why then did parents in those days pay a high price for boarding-schools? Grammar, geography, history, and accounts, were taught, parrot-like, from the book; but by far the greatest portion of time was given to bad music, worse drawing, and trumpery fancy-work, all which were *probably* laid aside immediately, and *most certainly* were so with the first occurrences that entailed responsible duties. Where, then, was education? The very principle of useful knowledge had afterwards to be learnt.

And the now hackneyed term "Useful Know-

ledge," suggests to the mind the educational system of the present day. We do not mean that of the "operatives," nor do we allude to any of the thousand-and-one systems by which philanthropists propose to regenerate the universe; but to the "education of young ladies" of the middle classes. Formerly there was too little culture for the mind; now, probably, there is too much. The attempt to excel in a variety of things can only, with ordinary minds, lead to disappointment in all: neither are people in the middle rank any happier for having imbibed tastes which only the possessors of rank and fortune can indulge. The multitude of pursuits to which the attention is directed prevents the mind from dwelling clearly, and with sufficient intensity, on any to master it; and many fashionably-educated young ladies are regular olios of bits and scraps. There are many ladies, indeed, whose talents have obtained most honourable notoriety; who have ingrafted some of the distinguishing characteristics of the other sex on the virtues of

their own, and have soared the flight of man, without forgetting or neglecting the domestic destination of woman! All praise and honour attend them, and all such! But in emulating their career, women of lower minds and inferior capabilities are apt to underrate domestic claims—the first, the most valuable, the most honourable to them; and this is an evil which is by no means diminished by the system of training in modern boarding-schools. There is no necessity, indeed, that domestic and housewifery duties should, as formerly, be taught in them; but it is a pity that the time and talents of some of the best years of life should be devoted *exclusively* to pursuits which are of exceedingly problematical value.

Another great evil of modern fashionable education, is the absurd and extreme preference adjudged to everything *foreign*—frequently almost to the exclusion of the most valuable English acquirements. The young lady who has easily acquired a little of the trickery of Italian singing — which passes with real

judges for just so much as it is worth—will execute a fashionable canzonetta; but if asked by an old-fashioned person for an English ballad, will be fain to confess that she has not *studied* English singing. She will talk of Tasso, and even approach Goëthe; but she will say nothing of Addison or Cowper, of Johnson or Milton, and perhaps has hardly heard of Richardson or Defoe. Nay, there are strong symptoms of Shakspeare going out of fashion, and Byron—what an absurdity!—is patronised in an Italian translation. The time of many, very many, fashionably-educated young ladies, is almost entirely occupied in the construction of elaborate trifles, and their conversation is of course usually on a par with this occupation. Nobody likes "old heads on young shoulders," but eighteen or nineteen years is just the age for the sparkling thought, the bright idea, the gushing feeling, the generous resolve, the enterprising spirit that would level mountains in its onward course; and these high and heaven-born feelings are checked and quenched in many in

pursuance of that phantom of the imagination — a fashionable education; which when acquired scarcely fits its possessor for *time*, and certainly does *not* prepare her for eternity.

CHAPTER II.

A COTTON-MAN'S DINNER, AN EVERYDAY CONCERN.

"And in fact he knew this world to be
An astonishing piece of cookery."
H. G. WHEELER.

"Endless it were to sing the powers of all,
Their names, their numbers, how they rise and fall."
CRABBE.

"MY dear Harriet, how happy I am to see you," said Miss Langshawe as, on returning accidentally to the breakfast-room, she found her schoolmate and friend there.

"I thought you would find me," said Miss Wolstenholme; "so now let us enjoy ourselves here awhile before we go and play at ladies—always a bore."

"But where are your father and brother?"

"Henry's somewhere about; my father will

be here by-and-bye; but tell me who's coming, and who's who; I suppose, of course, that the bride is the star of first magnitude in your drawing-room horizon to-night."

"Of course," replied Edith, "we must pay all due deference to her new honours."

"And no other strangers?"

"None, I think, to you, except Mr. Ashworth."

"Oh, he's only an old bachelor!"

"Nay, nay, Harriet, not quite so desperate; he is not much more than forty."

"What does his age matter? it is not years that ruin a man—at least, not years alone."

"What, then, is the matter with Mr. Ashworth?"

"The matter is, that he has too much matter. He's large, lusty, witty, and satirical; he talks loud, laughs louder; he quotes Pope the snarler, Boileau the cynic, and La Bruyère the satirical."

"A charming catalogue *raisonné*, indeed; where have you learnt all this?"

"No matter where—I hate him in anti-

cipation; I know he will be the death of me."

"I hope, love, you won't resign life without a slight struggle," said Edith, with mock commiseration, as she arranged the cushions of the couch on which her friend had thrown herself in apparent despair.

"And who and what is he?" said the young lady, starting up as suddenly as she had lain down; "and who is this high and mighty old woman who fastens him to her apron-string, and is come to show off her airs on us poor cotton folks?"

"I really cannot answer you, for I have not had the privilege of seeing him tied to the apron-string of any woman high or mighty."

"Now, Edith, give over quizzing: you know I mean the stiff-necked old maid he lives with."

"His aunt! she is elderly certainly; but as she is neither high, mighty, nor stiff-necked, you must pardon me if I did not at the moment recognize your description."

"She is a decent body, then."

"She is, in every sense of the word, a lady, and a kind-hearted one, and, as you may imagine, a very valuable acquisition to our circle."

"She is a person of good family, I've understood."

"Undeniably so."

"And even speaks of a grandfather."

"And of his grandfather's grandfather before him."

"Amazing! what a lion she 'll be; what in the world can have brought her to our 'region of savages?'"

"I really don't know."

"And you are intimate with her, Edith?"

"More so than I had any cause to expect in so short a time; but that is owing to the partial report of our dear kind friend, Mrs. Maitland, with whom she is well acquainted."

"Oh, I see! Well you must show your gratitude to our old *gouvernante* by qualifying your new friend for our circle as quickly as possible."

"What do you mean?"

"You must be aware, my dear, how utterly at fault she must be amongst us unless some kind friend give her a few hints for her guidance. For instance, I shouldn't wonder if she never heard of 'raw material,' or 'thrown silk,' and takes 'mules' and 'throstles' to mean long-eared quadrupeds and singing birds."

Edith laughed heartily; but her merry friend's further comments were interrupted by the arrival of some of the guests, and the party was speedily assembled.

The drawing-room in which Mrs. Langshawe received her visitors was as splendid as money could make it. The furniture and the decorations were, however, all good—the best of their kind; but there was an *elaboration* in the style, and a profuseness in the ornaments, that savoured more of a heavy purse than a cultivated taste. The walls were hung with silk damask, finished off by massive gold cornices and mouldings, or draped round the magnificent mirrors extending almost from

the ceiling to the ground, which reflected the forms of a fair bevy of ladies, whose garments were not certainly their least noticeable appendage. The couches, the ottomans, the bosses, the buhl timepiece, the profusion of ornamental trifles that glittered around; the choice exotics in the recesses, the elegant china ornaments, and the magnificent cut-glass chandelier which sparkled like diamonds in ten thousand different hues, and, gleaming in the mirrors, gave the idea of a fairy-land vista opening on every side — these, each in itself fit for the mansion of a nobleman—were yet clustered and crowded incongruously. They were, however, not merely collected, but, comparatively speaking, naturalized in the house of this lowborn and uneducated cotton manufacturer.

The dining-room was equally expensive and luxurious, though somewhat more sombre in its adornments. But the DINNER—ye gods!

The table was profusely decorated with plate, magnificent and modern, and literally

groaned under the weight of all those eatables that "man's gurmandize can feed." The richest of soups and the most luxurious of fish were followed by a course of more substantial food, which in its turn gave way to a succession of such elaborate collections of eatables as most surely were never congregated on any but a "cotton-man's" table. And then the manner of discussing it! Most earnestly did the good company do homage to the treat. There was no elegant trifling with plates and forks; no sentimental withdrawal from the vulgar and everyday habit of eating. The dinner was actually and elaborately devoured. Little was spoken during its progress except on the merits of the various dishes, and the intricacies of the culinary preparations. The good hostess entered with great animation into the mysteries of her *cuisine*, and exchanged sundry remarks with a well-dressed and rather saturnine-visaged gentleman on her left hand, on the propriety of this sauce having a grain more cayenne, or that ragout a thought

less seasoning. Never had dinner more justice done to it. The company evidently met to eat ; and eat they did.

There was, it may be supposed, none of that quietude of manner which in really highly-bred company places visitors, even of inferior rank, so completely at their ease, when their wants are supplied they know not how, and their feeling of strangeness is banished — how — they never think to inquire : still less was there that caricature of high breeding assumed by the "doubtfully distinguished," when a frigidity that chills the very blood to an icicle is substituted for aristocratic ease, a meagre table for a " genteel " display, and a cold indifference to your wants as a proof of fashionable *nonchâlance*. The courtesies of Mr. and Mrs. Langshawe's table were of a different order. Most actively, most unweariedly, did they exert themselves in specific attentions to each individual at the somewhat crowded table. Dish after dish was recommended and pressed on each ; voices rose to a somewhat lofty pitch in the earnestness of hospitable entreaty ; and

once a momentary sensation was caused by the sudden and by no means gentle descent of Mrs. Langshawe's clenched fist on the table, as her most obvious and ready method of obtaining the attention of her busily-occupied partner to the wants of a lady near her. The sensation seemed but instantaneous; perhaps the circumstance was not of unusual occurrence. Never was hospitality more genuine; never was enjoyment more real.

Whilst eating was at its climax, the door opened and a gentleman entered. He was short in person and rather stout, with a good-tempered ruddy face and small sparkling eyes.

"Come, Wolstenholme, I 'm very glad to see you; I thought you 'd forgotten us. You see we 've not waited."

"No, no! all right: I 'll soon make up for lost time."

He was cheerily greeted by all as he passed on towards the lady of the house, and one, Mr. Laycock, held out his hand to the newcomer.

A hearty smack *on* it was the reply to this salutation, accompanied by the words "I 've a crow to pull with you, Laycock."

"Well, now 's your time."

"Nay,—I 'll get my dinner first."

This important matter was in due time achieved by all, and

> "The dinner things removed,
> They all began to sing ;
> And they soon made the place
> Near a mile round to ring ;"

so says a very charming little ancient history; and certainly the grove on that memorable occasion was not made more suddenly vocal than was Mr. Langshawe's dining-room on the appearance of the dessert, which, like the dinner before it, comprised every luxury that wealth could purchase. The dinner had been a serious and business-like affair, on the due and proper discussion of which no exertion had been spared; now, the guests seemed to have a little time to congratulate themselves and each other.

Mr. Laycock addressed Mr. Wolstenholme.

"Well,—what have I been doing wrong?"

"Thee! nothing that I know of, man."

"But you said you had a crow to pull with me."

"Oh! ay, ay: it's t'other way: it's me that's in fault, not you. I've been thinking that I made a great fool of myself t'other day."

"I've no doubt you did: does your conscience accuse you?"

"It does."

"On what particular points?"

"Why,—I've been very uncomfortable ever since. I've some sort of a confused remembrance that I would let nobody talk but myself."

"For that, my good sir," interrupted another, "you are by no means answerable."

"No! how so?"

"That is entirely attributable to the champagne, not to you."

"Well, well; thank you, sir, thank you," said Mr. Wolstenholme, seemingly not displeased at the suggestion, and proceeding to

repeat apologies to which it was evident he was prompted unnecessarily by an over-scrupulous conscience.

He then turned to Mr. Ashworth, with an unpolished but most kind and courteous expression of welcome to the neighbourhood, and hope that he might find it agreeable. This gentleman, whose capacious person and ample cheeks bore testimony to the broad and beautiful enjoyment of all the good things of life, albeit

> "In manners frank, in manly spirit high,
> Alert good-nature sparkled in his eye,"

received this advance towards intimacy as cordially as it was offered. He spoke loud, as Miss Wolstenholme had said, and had an ugly habit of concluding most of his remarks with a short, loud, unmusical laugh, which seemed, perhaps from habit, to have become involuntary. As that young lady had said, moreover, he was somewhat given to satire, but its expression was much softened by habitual good temper, by gentlemanly breeding, and just now evidently by unsophisticated relish

of the good things around him. The wine circulated pretty freely, and under its soothing influence he began to grow sentimental, and talked of "evaporating in a sigh."

"What a great fog there would be!" said Miss Wolstenholme.

"You talk of 'evaporating in a sigh,'" said the saturnine-visaged gentleman, who had shown such skill in the science of cookery; "I should think a sigh itself breathed by you would have some difficulty to evaporate."

"Then," interposed the gay Edith, "such a sigh would just suit papa."

"Suit me, child?" inquired her father.

"Yes, sir; you told me this morning you loved *solidity in everything*."

"But who ever heard of a solid sigh?"

"Mr. H—— imagined one at any rate."

"*Læsa majestas* against the state and dignity of Cupid, whose unworthy representative for the present I am," said the portly Mr. Ashworth, with a sonorous sigh which made everybody laugh, and concluding with a still more sonorous haw! haw!

"If the remainder of your godship's artillery, your tears, your glances, and your darts," said Miss Wolstenholme, "be as substantial as your sighs, you will be a fearful opponent."

"Upon my word," said Mr. Ashworth, suddenly relinquishing his impersonation of the Paphian god, "I do not know why you should all look so quizzically on me and my aspirations. Is it because I am large and lusty that you laugh at my lover-like enactments? Why these are the very proofs of the truth of my pretensions. We perpetually hear of lovers 'sighing like a furnace,' which infers, I imagine, some warmth of complexion, 'love's own rosy hue;' and we have it on indisputable authority, that sighing 'swells a man out like a bladder,' and that is precisely my case, since I have been sighing away my soul at the feet of Miss Wolstenholme for the last two hours."

He then turned suddenly to Edith, and asked her if she had lately seen "that gentle shepherd born in Arcadie, who tuned his harp

to the soft wind's moan 'under the shade of melancholy boughs.'"

Miss Langshawe laughed at this flight, and replied that she had seen the hermit that morning.

"And who is this hermit? and what is he?" inquired a lady.

"A quiet madman, who lives alone in a hut of his own building."

"And is he not annoyed by idle neighbours and mischievous intrusions?"

"No! not now; he was so annoyed at first; but long habit, for he has been here twenty years, has accustomed the people to him: he has indeed no very near neighbours; and his kind heart, his inoffensive disposition, and his excellent character, have gained the esteem of those who know him."

"But what is the cause of such a strange and recluse life?"

"I have been told it was some disappointment in love or matrimony, which acting upon a weak mind, and a sensitive disposition, led him to adopt his present mode of life. This

account seems natural; whether true or not I don't know; for he came here a stranger, and he never alludes to his own circumstances."

Mrs. Langshawe's clenched hand (*Anglicè* fist,) again made the glasses ring.

"William, tell me this moment; did you not say that Mr. Wilson was a natural son?"

"Yes, I did," said Mr. Langshawe.

"Mr. Wilson is a relative of mine," said a lady, who appeared much excited; "I should like to learn the author of this calumny."

"I believe Mrs. Irton was my informant," said he, looking towards a lady who was attired both with elegance and magnificence, but who seemed engrossed in some ineffably composing reflections, and sat sleepy, silent, comfortable, and inattentive. But she was roused by the parties interested.

"Did you not tell me," said Mr. Langshawe, "that Mr. Wilson was a natural child?"

"Yes, I did."

"And pray who told you?"

"I don't know, I forget; I think Mr. Ashworth told me."

"'Lord! Lord!' said he, 'how this world is given to lying,' begging a thousand pardons for the quotation; but I told you, ma'am, that Mr. Wilson was a posthumous child. Haw! haw!"

"Well, I thought it was the same thing," said the lady.*

"Haw! haw! haw!"

The conversation returned to its old channels; the gentlemen occasionally vouchsafing a passing remark on the lighter topics discussed by the ladies. Their own, though brisk and intelligent, had reference, somewhat too exclusively, to what is aptly termed "the shop," to matters of business, and subjects of trade. One of the circle, a lady-like person, ventured a joking, and perfectly well-bred remonstrance to the gentlemen generally.

"Hold your tongue," growled a vulgar-looking man on the opposite side of the table,

* Fact.

"and meddle with your own matters; *I stink o' cotton*, and I don't care who knows it; so give us none o' your fine-lady airs here, and be hanged to them."

"There was a lady loved a swine,
Honey, said she,
Pig hog, will you be mine?
Humph! said he,—"

whispered Mr. Ashworth, and Edith could not repress a smile, though she was too good-natured to encourage him in his satire.

In the drawing-room, the usual topics of female conversation were varied and enlivened by the presence of the rich bride, whose dress and ornaments, which before dinner had been covertly glanced at, were now, under its inspiriting and heart-opening influences, openly admired and canvassed. The lady did not discourage the scrutiny.

"Do you admire my chain? this cost sixty guineas, but I 've a much more expensive one at home."

"Mine is a pretty one, though, in point of expense and massiveness, not to be named with yours."

"That!" (with a glance almost too scornful to be consistent with politeness,) "yes, it 's pretty enough; I have three or four such. You 're looking at my handkerchief, it cost seven guineas; I got only a dozen of them in Paris. I shall be there again in a few months, and then I mean to supply myself better."

"Hail to the *disjecta membra!*" whispered some one near Miss Langshawe, and to conceal the gathering smile she turned to her "fat friend," who had been the first to obey the summons to tea. "Will they not," continued he, "take out a new escutcheon?—raw-head-and-bloody-bones, with poultice and plaster, parted per pale, on a field tinctured gules: crest, an eye twisted? Haw! haw!"

The gentlemen were now re-assembled in the drawing-room, and short whist on their part and quadrille by the ladies, were prosecuted with zeal and alacrity until the "witching time of night."

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CHAPTER III.

THE OLD MAID.

"O Lady, worthy of earth's proudest throne!
Nor less by excellence of nature fit
Beside an unambitious hearth to sit
Domestic queen, where grandeur is unknown."

WORDSWORTH.

THE next morning being beautifully fine, Edith proposed to her friend Miss Wolstenholme that they should call on her new neighbour, Mrs. Frances Halling, who was already acquainted with her schoolmate by name. Harriet readily consented,—not that she cared anything in reality about the lady; but she was at that happy age, and of that careless though not unamiable disposition, which takes everything that comes easily and cheerily:

"She doffed the world aside, and bid it pass."

True, indeed, that world had as yet never frowned on her; she had seen only that gay and roseate countenance with which it greets the youthful, healthful, and unthinking child of prosperity. She and her brother, Henry, were the eldest of a very large family, though several intervening deaths which occurred between them and the younger children had naturally divided them from their brothers and sisters in pursuits and habits—not in affection: they were entirely a united and affectionate household. Their parents occupied a similar position to that of Mr. and Mrs. Langshawe; they had risen from the lowest rank by industry, and that almost magical good fortune which was so often in the earlier period of their existence an attendant on cotton-mills, to great wealth, which they displayed in the usual style of their compeers, but which was dignified and adorned by an open-hearted hospitality, and by a widely-extended and unwearying benevolence which redeems the character of Lancashire "cotton-folks" generally from much that might other-

wise degrade it, though it be not generally so shiningly pre-eminent as it was in Mr. and Mrs. Wolstenholme. They and the Langshawes had been early intimates in a very different sphere of life, and it was more from the influence of this lasting regard and unbroken intimacy, than from any participation in his friend's more high-minded notions on the subject of education, that Mr. Wolstenholme placed his daughter, fortunately for her, under the same tuition as Edith Langshawe.

The friends set out on their walk, which led through one of those wooded dells or cloughs which are so beautiful and peculiar a feature in Lancashire, and to which we have referred more particularly in our introductory sketch.

On emerging from this clough, they reached a narrow winding lane, bounded on each side by high hedges of hazel and hawthorn, and varied by ash, oak, and sycamore trees, now clothed in the vivid green of spring. The lane itself terminated abruptly and completely

in a large farm-yard; but, ere you quite arrived at this *ultimatum*, a path diverged from it which brought you to one of the prettiest habitations possible. It could hardly be called a house, yet it was certainly a great deal too convenient for a cottage; it was not lofty enough for the one, nor homely enough for the other, and it seemed to go in and out in every possible direction. Moreover, it was almost covered with climbing plants; and the red and yellow japonicas were giving way to the early leaves of the exotic, but now universal Virginian creeper, the twice-flowering Budleia, the springing shoots of the naturalized passion-flower, and clusters of the ever-blooming rose. The bright sun fell full on the house, and a gush of light streamed in at the open door.

"It is far too pretty for an old maid," said Harriet, as they turned into the small but exquisitely-arranged parterre which intervened between the house and the lane. A lady who was occupied in re-fastening a bough of the beautiful but fragile rose acacia, which

had broken from its support, turned quickly on hearing the click of the garden gate, and seeing Miss Langshawe, advanced to meet her with a cordial smile of welcome.

It is the fashion, perhaps we should rather say the custom, to describe old maids as stiff and formal, and as universally distinguished personally, if not mentally, by a peculiar rigidity and formality which does not appertain to the wife or the widow. Whether this be the case generally we cannot say; our own experience would lead us to suppose not. At all events we describe what we have seen.

So totally unmarked by any peculiarity was Mrs. Frances Halling's dress and appearance, that even Miss Wolstenholme, who had gone predisposed to quiz, could not, when she called her thoughts to counsel afterwards, remember at all of what that dress consisted. In person the lady was neither tall nor short, neither thin nor lusty; a common observer would have passed her unnoticed in a crowd, for her only distinguishing characteristics were

such as would hardly be noted by a common observer, viz., a somewhat thoughtful, yet benevolent, expression of countenance, and a gentle cordiality of manner.

Edith introduced her friend, who was welcomed with frank kindness, and Mrs. Halling led her visitors to the sunny breakfast-parlour, where, reposing his huge bulk on the sofa, was her nephew, Mr. Ashworth, dividing his attentions between a newspaper and a Newfoundland dog almost as huge as himself. But he started up with the celerity of a stripling, or "thread paper," on the first glimpse of the young ladies; and if his welcome was considerably more boisterous than Mrs. Halling's had been, it was not a whit the less cordial. Miss Langshawe was already an established favourite with both.

As the regions of aristocratic and fashionable life are a *terra incognita* to us, we cannot tell what is the usual mode of opening a conversation within their charmed circles, but in others, however varied their characteristics, "the weather" is the universal

refuge. The dull and the witty alike refer to it; the former indeed may cling to it as a theme, while the latter only glance at it as a prelude; but in one way or other it is indispensable to all.

And now its various phases past, present, and to come were fully discussed, ere another point was alluded to.

"I came to entreat," said Edith; "that you would favour us with your company at Lime Grove on Thursday, in your own way, very quietly. I ask it on my friend's account as well as my own; her stay with us is so short."

"I shall feel much pleasure in improving my acquaintance with Miss Wolstenholme, and also in visiting you. I have just been forming a conditional engagement for a later period. Mr. Ainsley has promised to pioneer me through his cotton-factory."

"Go through a cotton-factory! How strange!" said Miss Wolstenholme.

"Why strange?"

"Oh, I don't know; but we never think of such a thing."

"On the same principle, I suppose," said Mr. Ashworth, "if principle it can be called, which keeps the denizen of London a stranger to the Tower, the Abbey, and the British Museum!"

"Principle, indeed, you can hardly call it," said Mrs. Frances; "unless you distinguish by the name of principle that which certainly does appear to be an instinct of nature,—that is the propensity to think lightly, or perhaps I should rather say not to think at all, of what is within our reach."

"I fancy, dear madam, it is often more want of thought, than thinking lightly," said Edith. "When I was in London a short time ago, my friends exerted themselves so much to make parties every day to visit some great sight or other, that I felt uncomfortable, and begged that I might not disarrange their usual habits; but the reply, which appeared as sincere as it was courteous, was, that the obligation was on their side, for these sights were really a treat to them; they had never had opportunity to see them; and should

scarcely have made one if a stranger had not claimed their good offices."

"Quite true, I doubt not; and we who are tied to our country-homes spend half our lives in vain longings to behold spots which are enshrined in our imaginations with all the pomp and circumstance of chivalry and history, and of which we fancy the very dust must be vocal, while a Londoner will lay his head on his pillow every night of his life and never once dream of their near locality."

"No," said Harriet, "and all that I deem very barbarous, and I would not be an inhabitant of Cockaigne — if such phlegmatic disposition be indigenous to the soil—for the wide world; but still curiosity about the White Tower, or the old Royal home of England, or the Tombs of her noblest and mightiest sons, is so very different from a desire to see a cotton-factory.—My dear Mrs. Halling, I cannot understand it."

"That is quite probable, my dear. Yours are the years for action and impulse; as these

qualities subside and reflection, with age, steals over you, you will find that you are not, that you cannot be, indifferent to any subject in which the welfare of so large and increasing a portion of your fellow-creatures is concerned, even though that subject be a cotton factory."

There seemed to be a tacit reproach in these words which caused Miss Wolstenholme's cheek to flush; but as she looked in the benevolent and gracious countenance of the speaker, she found that any reproach was pointed by her own conscience alone. Mrs. Frances Halling had evidently no covert meaning in her words.

"I take shame to myself," said the young lady, ingenuously, "that I have never even thought of a factory in this light."

"It would perhaps, my dear, have been somewhat surprising if you had at your age."

"I don't know that, madam;" said Harriet, now that her feelings were touched, setting no bounds to her ingenuous confession; "I know, indeed, that papa's people have only

to come to him or mamma, when they are ill or in trouble, and get relieved, and I have thought no more about it; I have scarcely been inside the mill: but here is Edith, who is younger than I am, has been through her father's mill many a time; and not only that, she often superintends the school belonging to it."

"In doing that, I am only obeying my dear good father's wish; and he has insisted on my frequently visiting the mill with him, in order, as he said, that I might have a just idea of the value of wealth by seeing the toil to others by which it was obtained."

"I honour him, my dear, for his conduct; he deserves his wealth," said Mrs. Halling, with glistening eyes.

"But dear Mrs. Frances," said Edith, wishing to turn the conversation, "don't let my friend escape without the punishment she justly deserves. You have no idea how she slandered you yesterday."

"I am all curiosity: pray let me hear."

"She said you did not know the mean-

ing of 'mules,' 'throstles,' and 'spinning-jennies.'"

"It was a vile slander, and she shall dearly rue it; but first bring her into the dining-room to have some luncheon."

CHAPTER IV.

THE HERO AND A COTTON-MAN.

"Now who hath played a feter cast,
Since ingling first begonne,
In knitting of himselfe so fast,
Himselfe he hath vndone."

EARL OF SURREY.

"I CANNOT consent to it, Frank; I cannot consent."

"But, sir, what is your objection to Miss Langshawe?"

"That is not the point: Miss Langshawe, I have no doubt is a very charming girl: I am sure she is a very sweet-looking one; my objection is not to her, but to her family."

"I am sure, sir, Mr. and Mrs. Langshawe are very respectable people in their way."

"So are my coachman and cook very respectable in their way; yet you would hardly like to dub them father and mother."

"Pshaw, uncle, there is no analogy—"

"I beg your pardon, nephew, there is a strong analogy, or rather a strong similarity. Far be it from me to depreciate Mrs. Langshawe's actual worth; she is an excellent wife, a kind mother, a staunch friend, and an unwearying benefactress to the poor; but with all this she is vulgarity personified; and smoothly as you may gloss over the circumstance *now*, your cheek would glow, and your fingers would tingle, Frank, to have this lady expatiating at your table with the freedom of a near relative. Mr. Langshawe is a shrewd and worldly man; his calculating head and his busy fingers have told a golden tale for him; but his heart and soul are wrapt in his counting-house and ledger, and he looks with feelings not very remote from contempt on such a dreaming youngster as yourself. Besides I have other views for you."

"Excuse me, sir," said Frank, with some

hauteur, "if I deem that my *own* views are of some consequence in this affair."

"As you please, nephew; exactly as you please," said Mr. Ainsley smiling; "only hear me out. Listen to all I have to say, and then I will attend to your reply.

"I have a considerable fortune, acquired, as you know, in the trade of the times; but hand-in-hand with riches have I striven to gain those habitudes, tastes, and acquirements which alone can make riches respectable. Night after night, for weary hours after a day of toil, have I laboured as intently at mental acquirements as during the daylight hours I have at the business of the counting-house. Whilst Mr. Langshawe and others of my compeers closed the day by a social meeting at a tavern, or by a domestic debauch, I took a slender and simple meal, not for economy's sake, but to keep my head cool and my intellects clear for that object on which I had set my heart. Sir, it made my blood boil to hear the sneers and the ridicule cast on the 'cotton-lords.' I did not see why trade

was inconsistent with gentlemanly habits and refined manners, and I was determined to prove in my own person that it was not. I determined to be a *merchant prince*—and I am.

"I do not forget that for many things I am indebted to a career more fortunate than I had any right to calculate on; but I also remember with unmingled satisfaction how much is the result of my own unwearying exertions. Now, the few real gentry who inhabit our environs, and the few aristocratic travellers who visit the town, are not victimized at my dinner-table, or wearied in my drawing-room. But how little do any of them suppose that the man who can discourse of a Titian or Correggio, not indeed in the jargon of a connoisseur, but with taste and judgment—who can lead his own domestic orchestra correctly in a concerted piece—or stand without wincing if a French satirist or an Italian poet be glanced at—how little do they think that the man who does this could not at twenty years old write an English sen-

tence grammatically, and has acquired his hard-earned accomplishments entirely in the intervals of a laborious business!

"Frank, those advantages which I so bitterly felt the want of, I have bestowed freely, liberally, nobly, on you. I have spared no expense, no exertion, to give you the education of a gentleman; I have succeeded in introducing you to such society as may confirm you in the manners and habits of one, and it is but justice to you to add, that hitherto you have amply fulfilled my hopes and expectations. Do not disappoint me now. Do not for a passing fancy demolish the fabric which I have been long years in erecting. In the hope that you may fulfil my wishes, it is my intention to bequeath to you my entire property; but do not deceive yourself, Frank! I indeed have not a moment's thought of disinheriting the nephew whom I have accustomed to look to me for support; but there is a difference between a moderate income and great wealth—the former is yours, under any circumstances, the

latter but conditionally. My wealth shall never go to support vulgar ostentation."

"But, my dear uncle," said Frank, "if you would take the trouble to know Miss Langshawe, you would find her the reverse of 'vulgar' or 'ostentatious.'"

"So she may appear now in your eyes, or even in the eyes of others, with the last touch of 'finishing-school' manners in all their freshness, and the ingenuous modesty of youth, of which I can easily believe she has her share—glowing round her; but wait a few years; there's a homely proverb, 'What's bred in the bone will out in the flesh;'—*I* know old Langshawe and his wife well."

"I might, certainly, form a more aristocratic connexion. There are, I doubt not, titled and highly-descended ladies, who would condescend to take me for the sake of the money you promise me. I should be, perchance, a contemptible cipher in my own house, but that would be of little consequence."

"Of none in the world," said Mr. Ainsley,

laughing heartily: "No, Frank, you are perversely mistaking me; my ambition for you is much higher than that."

Frank looked with some surprise.

"Much higher than that," continued Mr. Ainsley, "for I consider the woman who will marry beneath her own rank merely for the sake of an establishment, of wealth, must have a mind—be her inherited rank what it may—a degree more vulgar than the vulgarest of our cottonocracy. I do not want you to step out of your sphere, Frank, I merely wish that you should maintain in all respects an elevated position in that sphere. And if your heart is set on taking a cotton-man's daughter for a bride, I have no possible objection to that; only I would wish you to select—which you may easily do—among more creditable specimens of our brotherhood than Mr. Langshawe."

"Indeed, sir, I hear Mr. Langshawe spoken of with much respect, as a man of great natural talent: it is not his fault that he was born in low life."

"It is not, certainly; but that does not take away from the odious reality of his present vulgar habits. Miss Langshawe will not do, Frank."

"Then, sir, with deep and heartfelt thanks for your great goodness to me, do not think me ungrateful if I prefer the small income you may be pleased to allow me, and marry Miss Langshawe."

"And show your disinterested affection for an amiable girl, by depriving her of all the expensive luxuries to which from her cradle she has been accustomed."

"Miss Langshawe is an heiress."

"And you will prove your manly independence by being indebted to your wife for your shirts and shoe-strings."

Walmsley's cheek flushed, and his lip curled: his uncle saw the sarcasm was not lost. He continued:

"But even if these difficulties did not exist, there appears to me to be a strong probability of one which does not seem to have occurred to you. This proposal may be no

more agreeable to Mr. Langshawe than it is to me."

"Mr. Langshawe dearly loves his daughter, and would, I am sure, do anything to contribute to her happiness."

"Mr. Langshawe loves his daughter more dearly, I doubt not, than any earthly thing—save his money. Frank, you cannot form an idea how that man's heart is wrapt up in his ledger; he lives on figures by day, he dreams of pounds, shillings, and pence by night—nay, his very aspirations to heaven are mingled with the intricacies of debtor-and-creditor accounts. In former years, he attended the old church; our pews joined, and I have seen him—seen him, sir—not one time, nor twenty, but a hundred times, when on his knees, steal a small pencil from his waistcoat-pocket, and while his voice ejaculated as loudly as any in the church, 'Lord have mercy upon us, miserable sinners!' the blank leaf of his prayer-book was rapidly filling with a myriad of complicated figures. That Mr. Langshawe loves his daughter, I do not doubt; that he

will compel her to marry contrary to her own inclination, I do not suppose; but that he will ever willingly give her to a man who has no practical knowledge of trade—I cannot for a moment imagine."

The preceding conversation will give the reader some insight into the character of Mr. Ainsley; his nephew must have a few lines devoted to him. Consigned in infancy, an orphan, to the care of his uncle, that uncle had performed a father's part to him; and as his own fortune increased, so did his views for the advancement of his adopted child become elevated and expanded. Frank Walmsley had had a college education, and was keeping terms prior to being called to the bar; more however, as an ostensible pursuit in life, than from any idea of deriving an income from his profession. He bore indeed a fair character for acquirements, but not more; and the placid and gentlemanly *contour* of his countenance was not marked by any decided indications of superior talent. His clustering fair hair fell over a somewhat melancholy fore-

head; and a pale cheek, and a slight bend in his tall figure, united with quiet and gentlemanly manners, combined to form a whole for which we wish we could find a better term than that hackneyed one—interesting. Somebody had called him "a dreaming youth;" perhaps he was so: but for some time past all his air-wrought castles had risen in their unsubstantial beauty around a shrine on which Miss Langshawe's image reposed.

With the hopeful anticipation of a lover, he would not suffer himself to look on his uncle's non-approval of his passion as fixed and definitive. He persuaded himself that a little time only was wanting to soften him to compliance with his wishes. He fancied that he himself had no intention to act contrary to Mr. Ainsley's commands; but then, he never suffered himself to suppose that a *command* contrary to his own wishes would be given. He felt galled and annoyed at the humiliating, nay, despicable light in which Mr. Ainsley had portrayed him, as offering unwelcome attentions; but, with a very common mental artifice, he resolutely closed his eyes to this

view of the subject. He *would* not suppose that his uncle meant really to disinherit him; still less would he allow himself to think that Mr. Langshawe would discourage attentions, if they were agreeable to his daughter,—and on this point he had some hopeful feelings—from one who was fully her equal in all respects; that is, in education and money, or to speak more correctly, in money and education; for money is the be-all, the do-all, and the make-all, and a man's good qualities are reckoned by the number of guineas he has realized. Birth and parentage amongst the Cottonocracy are not talked about, and "ancestor" is in their dictionaries designated "an obsolete word."

Perhaps, considering the self-satisfying tendency of Mr. Walmsley's meditations, it is not surprising that in no very long space after his conversation with his uncle, he should be found slowly riding along the lanes in the direction of Lime Grove; or it might be that the sagacious horse took his inattentive master along the well-accustomed road.

CHAPTER V.

AN EVENING WALK.

"These are beauties which shall last,
When the crimson blood shall waste,
And the shining hair wax grey,
Or with age be worn away;
These yield pleasures such as might
Be remember'd with delight,
When we gasp our latest breath
On the loathed bed of death."

WITHER.

IT was a beautiful afternoon in early summer when Edith Langshawe quitted her mother at the garden gate, in order to speak to William Bladow, the hermit, about a delicate plant which he had lately given her, and which did not seem to thrive in its new home. But she had likewise a great deal of business

on hand. She had to call on Betty Maye, (who had just added twin infants to a family that seemed not to want addition,) to tell her that a supply of gruel, and a set of little-clothes for the extra-additional stranger waited at the house for her sending: she had to inform Dame Parkinson, who had a school in which she taught "reding and soing at threepence a week, with a penny extra for manners," that the new hornbooks and catechisms which her father had promised were come; and her tasty reticule contained the somewhat vulgar freightage of a slice of delicate cold meat for old Betty Foster, who never tasted butcher's meat, except when it was given to her by Miss Langshawe or some other kind lady; for her son could not afford to buy it for his large family, and the old woman would not be indulged in what *they* did not take.

"Edith, my dear," said the generous but less discriminating Mrs. Langshawe, as for the fiftieth time she found her daughter in the larder purloining something, "why do you do

this? Why don't you send Roberts down at once with a joint to any deserving person?"

"My dear mother, where is the good of sending a joint of meat to a poor, sick woman, who can hardly eat an ounce? The meat must necessarily be given to the children who are hearty and happy without it, and the poor old woman would be no better for it."

"Well, my dear, why don't you then send a servant with what you like?"

"Because, mamma, these people are as independent in their feelings as you are, and would rather not taste a dainty from year's end to year's end, than have it brought as a charity by a pampered servant. Do let me have my own way, mamma; in fact, you must, for my father says he can't manage me, and therefore, I don't think it becoming in you to try. So do, dear mother, retire to your own proper apartments."

And the gay girl placed her hands on her mother's shoulders, and pushing her out of the larder, shut the door. The proud and happy mother retired, but it was only to put on her

bonnet that she might walk with her child through the plantation, and dismiss her with an unspoken but heart-breathed blessing.

And Edith was blessed. The blessing of the widow and the fatherless; the blessing of the stricken, the desolate, and the poor, came upon her. Her father, though liberal, was somewhat ostentatious in his charities; they had reference to societies, not individuals: her mother's was a great, but undiscriminating generosity; but Edith's was like the gentle dew from heaven, irrigating and refreshing with perpetual moisture. She gave away to no very great amount; she would have had no difficulty in obtaining five times as much from her father, but she did not want it. She knew that perpetual *giving* is apt to deaden those feelings of independence which are the pledge of the well doing of poor people. She stimulated them to exertion by occasional and well-timed aid; but especially by taking an obvious interest in their pursuits. This discriminating wisdom of thought and action she had acquired from the example of Mrs. Mait-

land, during her many years' residence in that lady's house.

Her purse, however, was always quickly opened on occasions of emergency; and one of her errands to-day was to take a paper to Thomas Grimshaw, which she had coaxed from her father at breakfast that morning, containing a discharge in full for his last quarter's rent.

"I tell you, Edith, you 'll ruin me, child; that will be the end of it."

"Never mind, dear father, if I do; only think how comparatively happy these poor folks will be!"

"Comparatively! I think they ought to be superlatively happy, picking my pocket in that way. And what is it all for, pray?"

"It will only be very comparative happiness after all, sir: their cow, which was their chief means of support, died yesterday: *this* will not make up the loss."

"No more it will, child. Stay, Edith; they are industrious folk, I know. You had better tell them to come here daily for their milk until they have got another cow; your mother

will give the necessary orders. And—give me that paper, Edith, I think I may as well extend the discharge over the coming quarter, and that will give him time to get round."

And having done this the Cotton-lord hastened from the room to escape his daughter's thanks, muttering that she "always made a fool of him."

After Edith had executed her various commissions she turned into a long winding lane, bordered with high hedges in which the hawthorn was giving place to the dog-rose and honeysuckle. A fine ash tree, a branching oak, or a massy chestnut sprang at intervals from the hedge-row, spreading half across the lane. The lark was soaring aloft in the deep blue sky, receding from the watching eye until it was utterly lost in the bright beams whither the strained and aching gaze refused to follow it, and then suddenly re-appearing, approached with incredible velocity until it dropped like a shot upon the earth.

As she was slowly moving along she heard the sound of a horse's feet, and turning, she

saw a gentleman advancing whom she immediately recognised. The recognition was mutual; for with an eager gesture and a delighted exclamation of "My dear Miss Langshawe is that you?" he sprang from his horse.

"My dearest Miss Langshawe," he again ejaculated; when, seeing Edith's look of surprise, he instantly checked himself, and said in a more self-possessed manner—

"Indeed, Miss Langshawe, you cannot form an idea of the pleasure I felt at meeting you here, when I expected only to see bees and butterflies."

"Some of your polite sex would say that you had met with nothing else now," laughed Edith.

"They would belie you then, at any rate; but what an independent rambler you are to be here alone!"

"I have been accustomed to these lanes all my life, and am quite in the habit of walking alone; though I confess I shall be somewhat later than I anticipated."

"I am not at all," said Walmsley, "an

admirer of those dainty young ladies who cannot cross their own thresholds without a body-guard in the shape of a pampered footman, and I am especially happy to find you without one now, as it enables me more boldly to offer my attendance."

"As a pampered footman?"

"As what you please," said he, laughing, "so that you permit me to walk with you."

"Well! I think I must not discourage so humble-minded a servitor; but my indulgence by no means extends to your horse, which will be a rather inconvenient attendant. Can you not leave it at this farm?"

CHAPTER VI.

A MODERN HERMIT.

"A lonely man,
Of spirit sad and mild,
Who hath his little dwelling-place
Amid a region wild.
The wild-flowers of the desert
Grow round him thick as weeds,
And, in their beautiful array,
Of holy things he reads."

MARY HOWITT

THEY shortly quitted the lane and advanced by a footpath across some fields which seemed but partially reclaimed, and which brought them towards one of those wooded dells or cloughs which are so beautiful a feature of Lancashire scenery. They threaded a narrow path amongst the tangled shrubs and bushes which clothed the sides of a rather abrupt declivity. At the bottom of the dell a brisk

and sparkling streamlet was spanned by a plank by no means particularly broad or steady, over which Edith tripped with the lightness of a sylph. Her companion followed on a winding-path up the gentler ascent on the other side, and after tracing its devious windings for a short space, they turned an abrupt angle which gave to view a scene which caused Mr. Walmsley to utter a vivid expression of astonishment and delight. On the summit of a very small hill, or hillock, right before them, was erected a low, one-storied habitation. It was constructed of rough small stones of all shapes and sizes, filled up with plaster; the windows, of which there were several, were neatly bordered round with pebbles, shells, &c., in fanciful devices; the roof was thatched, and surmounted by a rustic chimney; and the porch which was low, so low as to oblige the visitor to stoop on entering, was formed of fantastic bars of wood, thickly entwined with honeysuckle and China roses. The cottage itself was half hidden in the plants which were cherished around it, and a

branch of giant ivy had surmounted the lowly roof, and was twining its clasping arm round the chimney.

To one side, open to the south, and securely sheltered from less genial quarters by a skeleton house, so constructed as to form no inapt accompaniment to the dwelling-house, were two rows of straw bee-hives, and close behind grew a weeping birch, its graceful and feathery foliage drooping as if in protection and defence over the lowly habitation of these useful and beautiful creatures. The garden, which was of tolerable extent, was laid out in fanciful devices, and evidently tended with the greatest care. A laburnum, whose decaying flowers gave token of lately having shone a mass of lustrous gold, flung its branches arcade-wise over the rustic wicket; while a willow, trained to meet it from the opposite side, gave to the entrance the appearance of a Gothic arch. Honeysuckles, carefully trained round the trunks of both, and now breathing sweetness, mingled their blossoms with the pretty laburnum leaves, as if to console them

for the flowers that were dead, or blazed like meteors amid the dark narrow leaves of the willow, whose branches swept the ground. The elderberry tree in the full perfection of its beauty—and a beautiful flower it bears—grew wildly on the outskirts of the garden, mingled with the mountain ash, (now also in flower,) the elegant birch, the wide-spreading oak, the young larch opening in a green of vivid brightness, and the magnificent horse-chestnut presenting a dark mass of almost impenetrable foliage. Some aspens quivered in the zephyr-like air; and a clump of dark old firs, far outstripping in height everything around, stood out in splendid relief against the bright sky. The long slanting beams of the declining sun threw a halo of glory over everything.

No sounds broke the stillness save those which fitly accompany and seem not to disturb, but to give a character to the silence of the country. The bleat of a sheep, or the occasional lowing of a cow, came softened through the distance from the common in

which this clough at no long distance terminated. The ripple of the brook below was "most musical, most melancholy," as was the cooing of some wood-pigeons; the clear whistle of the throstle sounded like a chaunt of joy and happiness, and the bees murmured a thanksgiving as with honey-laden thighs they clustered round the entrances of their homes; whilst every leaf that waved in the air made music of its own that formed no unfitting accompaniment to the wild, wailing, spirit-like tones which now rose on the air, and anon sunk into silence, merely to resume almost instantaneously the fairy-like strain.

On stooping to the earth the ear would catch a mingled multitude of sounds, subdued yet clamorous, confused yet harmonious, gentle yet undeniably distinct. A fairy-tale writer would say the spirit-dwarfs were at work in the mines: a dweller in cities would say it was the distant busy hum of men; a speculative theorist has guessed, possibly not inaptly, that it is Nature at work in the earth, elaborately preparing under ground the myriad

productions which refresh and delight us. Be it what it may, in the quiet and calm of a summer's night it may ever, by the earnest listener, be distinctly heard.

After the first exclamation of surprise, Walmsley stood like one entranced; but when that unearthly and solemn strain stole on his ear, like the vesper-hymn of some disembodied spirit, his countenance assumed an appearance of perplexity.

"This is some enchantment, Miss Langshawe!" said he.

"It is an æolian harp in yonder tree," replied she. "Come, come in!"

So saying, she led the way through the wicket-gate into the garden, and there, seated on a rustic bench, under the shade of a large pink hawthorn in full flower, was seated a person most singularly-attired in garments of a Spanish form; but his appearance, though *outré* and singular in the extreme, was perfectly neat. At his feet crouched a shepherd's dog, which frequently raised its head to its master's knee as the ready hand descended to

stroke and fondle it. Suddenly it pricked up its ears and barked, but quickly darted off, and was whining and fawning round Miss Langshawe, who seemed to be on very familiar terms with it. The strange master of the domain also advanced, and welcomed her with evident satisfaction, and her companion with kindly courtesy. He was in person tall and slim, though somewhat bent; his countenance was mild and melancholy, his face pale, his manners gentle, and his grey beard descended almost to his breast. His dialect and speech declared him at once to belong to the humbler walks of life; but with a homely dialect there was a meek and unoffending retiredness of manner, a winning gentleness of speech, that far outdid any conventional politeness; and a peculiar thoughtful tone of remark which indicated habits of somewhat melancholy reflection.

"This is a pleasure I had not looked for to-night, Miss Langshawe, or I would have been in better order to receive you."

Mr. Walmsley, at any rate, thought that

there was no need for the apology, as with a wondering eye he followed the hermit into his singular abode. They first, however, surveyed the garden, passing along narrow zig-zag walks, leading between flower-beds redolent of sweets, kept beautifully neat, and where not even a solitary weed ventured to raise its proscribed head amongst

> "The little borders quaintly cut
> In fancies rich and rare."

Here and there mimic rockeries were raised; fantastic devices and ornaments of various kinds, sculptures "quaint and rude," baby grottoes and Liliputian images diversified the scene. They passed also small plots of herbs and vegetables neatly *planted* off by a very low range of rockery-work almost hidden in creeping plants; half a dozen gooseberry-bushes occupied one corner, and the orchard boasted a single apple tree, on whose trunk was flourishing magnificently a cluster of that curious excrescence the misletoe. Miss Langshawe, who knew the old man's pride in it, took care to refer with pleasure to the beau-

tiful clusters of gleaming white berries with which she had been presented for two or three successive winters from this very plant; and the old man told of his having carried the seeds eighty miles, of his having given many away, but of none having flourished but his own.

Their progress brought them along the side of the cottage, adjoining which, and under the same roof, was a shed in which was comfortably housed a rough pony of the smallest breed, being hardly larger than a Newfoundland dog. They passed this, and stooping low entered the dwelling. Here, in what might politely be termed the hall, was placed a square table, on which nuts, gingerbread, ginger beer, cakes, honeycomb, and trifling confectionary were laid out in neat order as for sale. Numbers of persons who, however, crossed the garden by a much more direct path than Edith had chosen, visited the hermit, and after making their purchases at this table were ushered by him over his domain. The house consisted of several small

apartments, or cribs, in not one of which it was possible to stand upright, and which were as peculiar in the fitting up as in the construction. The walls were entirely hung with pieces of print, chintz, damask, gingham, arranged with extreme neatness; and the furniture was an odd accumulation of chairs, tables, &c., of an infinity of shapes and ages; some gilded, all antiquely carved. It seemed marvellous how the owner could have procured them to those who did not know that they were the gradual accumulation of more than twenty years, during which, silent and solitary, he had resided here. Nothing of a novel appearance which was offered to him, or which he had the means to purchase was refused an asylum; and Walmsley was astonished to see busts, casts from human features, curious carvings and pictures arranged with evident attention to light and effect. Taste is of no rank; it may be improved and refined, and drawn out by cultivation, but it cannot be *created*. The seed must be sown by Nature. But what struck our visitor the

most was a picture in the room evidently much occupied by the hermit, of a female in the act of presenting a bowl. It was exquisitely beautiful in outline and design, and would well, Walmsley thought, have graced the gallery of a connoisseur. He was gazing on it with great admiration when he was interrupted by a sigh heaved near him. He turned and saw the hermit regarding him with a look of intense earnestness, so intense, indeed, that he did not immediately perceive Walmsley's surprise; at last he spoke. "Forgive me, young sir, but your countenance brought my short days of happiness to my mind."

He was, then, not happy. Did he sigh for communion with his kind?—that could hardly be, for he had voluntarily quitted them, and might any day return to them! Did he love solitude?—what could be more perfect than his: Did he want money?—no; for he frequently refused it when offered; and besides, when did money alone produce happiness?

Frank, much struck with the remark, was

looking on him with deep interest, when Miss Langshawe, with ready kindness and delicacy, made some remark on the painting.

"It is, indeed, beautiful!" said Frank.

"Many an hour do I sit looking on it," said the old man.

"Did you, then, know the original?"

"No sir, no. I obtained the picture by mere chance, and knew nothing of the original. But the picture is enough to fill one's mind, for I look and look till I almost fancy it speaks to me. Oh! God Almighty has made nothing so beautiful, in this beautiful world, as a woman's face; and when it is lighted up with good humour, and the eyes beam on you in kindness, it is almost too beautiful for earth!"

"Is that the reason," said Frank, smiling, "that you run away from them all into this hut?"

"Mr.—, sir,—I don't know your name, but whoever you are, don't joke with an old man's sorrows. You are young yet, sir, but you

may live to know that life may bring troubles which time cannot heal."

"I beg your pardon, most sincerely," said Frank; "I had not the slightest intention to hurt your feelings."

"No offence, sir,—no offence," replied the kind-hearted recluse; "I was foolish to think of it; but I am, as you see, lonesome and given to fancies."

"Are you never dull here? Do you not want company?"

"Want company! no, never! My house and my garden, let alone the people who come to see them, occupy me so much that I have no time to be idle or dull. But everything about me is busy and occupied, and why should I be idle? Before I am up in the morning, and I am no sluggard, the lark is singing in heaven, and the throstle is whistling a merry tune; the bees are not abroad so soon, but it is not idleness; for I watch 'em creep, one after another, out of their hives, as if they were trying whether the air would do yet or not; the flowers, too,

which had been hanging their heads through the damp and dew of night, open their leaves by degrees, and spread their broad heads to the sun; the swallows — there are a dozen nests building now round the hut, — twitter and chirp, and bustle, as if they had all the business of the country on their hands. Oh! it is a blessed and a holy time is the early morning, when everything is fresh, and bright, and beautiful; and the air is full of bright sparkles, which I sometimes fancy are the angels which have kept watch over us by night, who are going back to heaven before man has had time to do any of the follies and crimes which they weep to behold!"

"And do you really think that the angels visit earth?"

"My dear Miss Edith, yes! Often and often do I sit in the calm evenings till I almost fancy I hear them; that *is* fancy I know, but not the less surely do I know they are there. And soon the stars come out, one after another, and glimmer in the water, and the leaves of the dark trees glisten like

silver in the bright moonlight, and all grows hushed and still; and I look round again and the whole heaven is blazing with millions of stars, and the earth looks almost as beautiful as heaven, and the holy silence is not broken even by the chirp of a bird,—oh! then I think, Miss Langshawe, that all that glory could not be made for the weak and wicked men that are sleeping in idleness; and I feel that hosts of angels are about me, and I steal to my hut, and I implore the God of all these bright and glorious hosts that he would have mercy upon me, a weak and miserable sinner. And he has; for I dream beautiful visions the live-long night, and I awake so happy!"

And the pious enthusiast sat with folded hands and his face raised upwards, as if realizing the visions which his fancy had conjured up.

> "Reader, these impulses
> Blame thou not lightly; nor will I profane,
> With hasty judgment or injurious doubt,
> That man's sublimer spirit, who can feel
> That God is everywhere!"

"I am indebted to you, Miss Langshawe, for a most unexpected pleasure," said Walmsley, as they left the hermitage: "this scene is quite a romance!"

"So should I often think, if it were not reality," said Edith; "but it is all true; and the hero is never otherwise than as you have seen him, except that I never heard him speak so openly as he did to you this evening about the picture."

Walmsley was silent, for the mention of the picture had called, with more than usual vividness to his mind, divers thoughts connected with the living picture at his side;—thoughts to which he had twenty times during the afternoon been on the point of giving utterance, but had checked himself.

Edith was silent also.

The gentle flush of evening had taken place of the glowing tints of afternoon, and was steeping all around in a halo of mellowing and softening light. The sun's disc was sinking below the horizon, but his fiery hosts yet hung out their gorgeous banners in the western

sky; while in the east, one gentle star, like a "a pale votarist in palmer's weeds," heralded the approach of the queen of night and her brilliant train. The evening was calm, and still, and soft. Its influences were irresistible, and ere the cottage was reached which sheltered Walmsley's horse, wishes were spoken which had hitherto found no vent in words, and hopes were uttered which till now had been "prisoners closely pent." Little was said by him; by Edith nothing. But the spell had been broken.

Note to the preceding Chapter.

In a book so professedly matter of fact as this, it may be thought I have outraged probability in the delineation of this character. The following letter, which I transcribe literally, will, I think, clear me from this imputation, and show that the licence I have taken is not more than "poetical." Those hints about the hermit's dress, mode of travelling, &c., which are not contained in the letter,

were communicated to me by the writer, during the one only evening which I ever had the pleasure to spend in his company.

I have myself once seen this hermit in Manchester.

" Middleton, Jan. 15, 1839.

" MADAM,

" In accordance with the request of your brother, I forward to you such particulars of the life and character of William Butterworth, commonly known as the Gloddit hermit, as I have been able to obtain from persons who knew him, and the history of his life, well

" His father, a worthy and honest man, was a clockmaker, residing at the small hamlet of Round Thorn, near Oldham. William was instructed in the art of weaving, but never was partial to the work, which was too confining and sedentary for his taste. He early displayed traits of eccentricity, and when sufficiently grown to be in some degree above the control of his father, he walled up the door of his chamber at his parents' residence, so as

to prevent communication with the other rooms of the house, and opening a door outside, he ascended and descended by a ladder, which he drew up when he wished to be alone.

"About this time he had a love affair, and was disappointed; and his family, probably knowing the cause of his retirement, forbore to annoy him, by intrusion or remonstrance, and his passion was, in time, succeeded by a kind of serene melancholy, blended with all gentleness and simplicity. Previously to this trial he had shown some disposition to cultivate the arts. He had become a tolerable proficient in painting, and was considered by his neighbours as a youth of great promise in that line; but, though he afterwards became a rather clever scene-painter, he never attempted the higher branches of the art. It would seem as if his genius had been overthrown with his happiness.

"When, after this seclusion, he again sought the world, he became a performer on the boards of a rustic theatre at Royton, where he tried to dispel the cloud from his brow, and to

forget the bitterness at his heart, by enacting the low parts of comedy. These exhibitions were much attended at that time; they were performed in the large room of a public-house (the Unicorn); and Butterworth was considered a good actor in his line. He never formed, nor attempted to form a second attachment; the name of *his* fair one is not known, nor has it been ascertained whether the disappointment arose from her death, or insensibility to his merits. Her name, I believe, never escaped his lips, though the fact of his having been disappointed was several times avowed by him.

"As he advanced in years, his wish for seclusion returned; he received little sympathy from his immediate neighbours, and probably concluded that all was "vanity of vanities." He accordingly obtained permission from a Mr. Becket, a shopkeeper at Glodwick, to enclose a nook of waste land, called The Close, situated on the brow of a hill near the village. He there laid out a garden, and erected a lowly cottage (lowly, as if to prevent the

winds from sweeping it away), wherein he took up his abode, and continued to reside during the remainder of his life. This place he embellished according to his uncultivated taste; and nothing of a novel appearance was refused a place in his depository. The roof, as before intimated, was low, and the visitor had to stoop, except when seated; the rooms, or rather cribs, of which there were several, were hung with tarnished drapery, gingham, or printed cotton, and furnished with sofas, chairs, and stools, antiquely gilt, or carved: there were busts; casts from human features; curious carvings and pictures; and one of these, a beautiful female with a bowl which she was presenting, was of surpassing loveliness. The garden was jumbled with grinning images at every turn, and curious stones, formed into small rockeries; willows were sweeping in the wind, and rose-bushes and flowers mingled wildly. The garden was entered beneath an arch of honeysuckles twined around willows; and threading narrow and

crooked paths, the visitor entered the hermit's hall of audience (if it might be so termed) where he found the old man seated behind a table, spread with cakes, nuts, ginger-beer, and confectionary: these articles were on sale, and each visitor was expected to purchase something. They were then conducted through the little fairy cell, the venerable occupant attending, and giving such explanations as were required. His portrait has, I am informed, appeared in the "Metropolitan Magazine;" it is said to be a good likeness, and to that I must beg to refer you.*

"In this retirement he lived about twenty-six years, and died, after a short illness, five or six years ago. It was supposed he had saved money, as his visitors were numerous, and many of them wealthy; and his relations, in expectation of finding a hoard, razed the cottage to the ground; but they found nothing to compensate for their labour. The site is now scarcely distinguishable; and the me-

* I have not been able to find this portrait.

mory of this modern hermit is passing into oblivion.

" I am, madam,

" Your most humble servant,

" Samuel Bamford."

CHAPTER VII.

A PAIR OF LOVERS.

"Sweet Phœbe, do not scorn me; do not, Phœbe;
Say that you love me not; but say not so
In bitterness."

SHAKSPEARE.

In a similar shady lane, in the soft balmy air, and beneath the same gentle and radiant moon, but at several miles' distance from the scene of our last chapter, another couple were loitering on their homeward way. The youth—for from his appearance you would scarcely have supposed he had attained the age of manhood—was somewhat pale and sickly-looking; his features were rather handsome, especially as they were now lighted up

by a colour and animation somewhat unusual; for, as we have said, his general appearance was sickly, and the prevailing characteristic of his countenance was a deficiency of expression, indicative certainly of want of energy, perhaps of want of intellect. He was dressed in home-spun fustian of the rudest make — the usual attire of his class. He was an "operative," belonging to one of the neighbouring cotton-mills.

His companion, a young girl of the same class, was pretty, exceedingly; and her countenance betrayed none of that want of energy or intellect which characterised her lover's, for there was self-will and a consciousness of beauty written in every line of it. Its *piquante* expression was rather enhanced by her costume—the usual one of the country girls of the neighbourhood—and which would be considered picturesque, if represented as Swiss or Italian. Custom is a sad foe to the *interesting*. She wore a black stuff petticoat, and a short pink bed-gown, which was a little open

at the throat and also left her arms bare, and was gathered tightly and neatly round her slim waist by the band of her checked apron. She had enormous wooden-clogs, above which a very neat ankle appeared in a black worsted stocking; her hair was neatly braided, and a Barcelona silk handkerchief, which about half covered the crown of her head, was tied under her chin, the point of the handkerchief hanging down behind. With a mixture, as it seemed, of vexation and mirth, half-laughing, half-pouting, and, perhaps, a little, "a very leetle" sulking, she passed along, snatching at the flowers in the hedges as she went, breaking and scattering them, as it seemed, in mere spite.

"Why do you bother and torment me so? you let me have no peace."

"I don't want to bother you, Nancy: I only want you to be kind."

"Well, I am kind; didn't I come a-walking the minute you asked me! What would you have?"

"Ah, Nance! I 've seen the time when you didn't want asking, but came of your own self to meet me."

"More fool me, for my pains."

"Don't say that, lass; don't say that. Those were happy days; but I 'm afraid they 're over. You 're not like you used to be."

"There! Again finding fault, all for nothing!"

"No, Nancy, it 's not all for nothing; you know it is not: you know what people say of you."

"What do they say?" said she, turning suddenly and facing her companion, while a deep crimson flushed her cheek.

"They say you listen too much to the young master."

"And you believe 'em, Jem?"

"No Nancy, I don't believe 'em; if I believed 'em, poor as I am, and humble as I am," — and for a moment he looked as animated as herself—"you'd be no wife for me. No Nancy, love," continued he, putting his

arm round her waist, while, with the other hand he drew something from his breast, "How can I look at this and believe 'em?"

It was a simple token enough; half a sixpence, with a small hole bored in it by which it was hung by a string round his neck.

"Nance, love, show me the other half," he whispered.

The maiden seemed touched; she answered not a word, but quietly drew a corresponding token from her own bosom.

The lover seemed almost as much overjoyed as if he had previously doubted its existence, or at any rate its location; and in the strength of his renewed confidence he again urged the suit which had previously been received with such contumely, viz. that he might be allowed at once to put up the banns for their marriage.

"I shall work, Nancy! I shall work with the strength of two men when I have you all my own to work for: I'm sure I shall! We will begin quite quiet; just hire one small room. I've saved something toward fur-

niture for it, and our overseer would advance me a little I know: and it shall go hard, my girl, but you shall have a little house of your own before long. Now, Nance, hear reason, do."

Whether it were reason or not, it was love; and if there be any truth in proverbs, true love, too: for a cross was on the wind even while he spoke; his true love did not "run smooth."

Either her own conscience, or her lover's pleading, or the sight of the token had softened Nancy's humour very considerably; and if not an encouraging, she was at least about to give a gentle reply to the youth's petition; when, on raising her eyes for the purpose, she saw a gentleman advancing towards them. She started, gave a second keen glance, then abruptly shook off her lover's arm which still encircled her waist, drew herself up, and gave the discomfited young man a peremptory look which said, as plainly as a look could say,—

"Keep your distance!"

By this time the horseman was close to

them, and Nancy all smiles and radiance dropped a curtsy. The gentleman, Mr. Langshawe, looked, hesitated, looked again, and then suddenly stopped his horse, and cordially held out his hand.

"Is that you, Nancy? I'm glad to see you; and to see you looking so well, too. How is your mother, and all the bantlings? quite well?"

"Yes, sir, thank you, quite well."

"And who is this you have with you?" asked Mr. Langshawe, turning to the lover who stood, hat in hand, looking sheepish enough.

"Jem Forshaw, sir," said Nancy, very demurely.

"Oh, this is Jem Forshaw, is it? I've heard of him. Nay, never blush, Nancy: when both father and mother approve, there is nothing to blush for. Young man, I've heard a good character of you; continue to deserve it, and you shall not want a friend to help you on in the world. Your sweetheart is a kinswoman of mine."

With these words he nodded kindly to both and pushed on.

Not quite sure whether he really stood yet in this rough and toiling world, or whether he had been suddenly wafted to some paradise of cotton-operatives, the young man turned with a glowing countenance to his bride-elect; but no correspondent glow illumined her features. She was not pettish, as she had been, but she was cold and shy; and with a heart more than ever chilled and sad from the elation he had just before experienced, the disappointed young man attended her in almost unbroken silence to her mother's door.

The accidental meeting with Mr. Langshawe had re-awakened in their full intensity, feelings and aspirations which had in some degree lain dormant under the influence of her attachment to Forshaw. Other circumstances also had of late excited them; and they were of a kind which expressly militated against the happiness of her lover. Her mother and Mrs. Langshawe were first cousins;

in childhood intimates and playmates; and though in after-life their lot was cast so differently, Mrs. Langshawe, to her credit be it spoken, never forgot the companion of her youth. She had, indeed, in the plenitude of her liberality, wished to raise her cousin in society by means of wealth, the universal passport in Lancashire, and a pretty considerable one elsewhere: but to this proposition her better-judging husband peremptorily refused to accede. "It would be no real kindness," he said, "to transplant them suddenly from the place and the station to which they had been accustomed. *Help*, *assistance* when they want it, I am always ready to give them." And this his actions had frequently proved. Then he would add, while a sarcastic smile passed over his countenance, "Let them work their way as I have done; we were equal once. I have not worked hard all my life through from philanthropy, or to enrich other people's children; but my own."

During one of the good woman's missions to Lime Grove to solicit on occasion that as-

sistance which was always generously accorded, Mrs. Halliwell had taken her eldest daughter, Nancy—then a girl of about fourteen years—with her. They were both kindly welcomed, and the girl, from a feeling of kindness towards her, was detained for a week. This mistaken indulgence was most prejudicial to Nancy. Ideas were then awakened in her mind, which, though they lay dormant for some time, had only wanted exciting: discontent with her own coarse fare, humble abode, and hard labour was then first engendered; and all her manifold musings on her lot thereafter ended with the ejaculation—thought, if not uttered:—"They were once such as I am, why may not I some day be like them?"

She was now really attached to Jem Forshaw, but ambition and love waged severe warfare within her; and it was always an unpropitious hour for her lover's suit when any thought of "Cousin Langshawe" crossed her mind.

CHAPTER VIII.

TWO COTTON-MEN.

"—The only true philosophy
Is to jog through life most easily."
H. G. WHEELER.

"Still common minds with us in common trade
Have gain'd more wealth than ever student made."
CRABBE.

"I 'M reeght glad to see thee, Mr. Langshawe, that I am; you 'll e'en tak me as ye find me: we 've known each other these forty year, and the world 's gone well wi' us both: thanks to luck and our own wit."

So saying, Mr. Balshawe ushered his unexpected visitor through the passages of a large and elegant house, and finally enthroned him in an armed chair in the kitchen—his own accustomed domicile when guests were absent.

"Now stir yoursel', Maggy, come! Don't let the grass grow under your feet! If I 'd done so, you 'd ne'er hae had this fine house about ye; come, mistress, stir yourself, will you; look sharp—be slippery!"

And Mrs. Balshawe did stir herself. With the quiet celerity of one well accustomed to the work, she laid a cloth with other etceteras on the table, and turning up the sleeves of her gown, did rather more than superintend the progress of a steak which a servant was cooking. This operation achieved, she removed it to the table, placed chairs for her husband and his guest, and as her wont was on ordinary occasions, prepared herself to wait upon them. This she did with great quietude and good-humour; she looked meek and gentle, and it was quite evident that the leading principle to which she had been for a lifetime habituated was, that man was the nobler animal of the two; and if that was the case five-and-twenty years before, when her husband stepped from his little clay-paved loom-shop into the small apartment which was

"parlour and bed-room and all," how much more must it be the case now, when he "was monarch of all he surveyed" in his elegant and capacious mansion, or in the magnificent factory and thickly-populated hamlet which nearly adjoined it? So she continued her attendance without remark, the husband expecting it as a matter of course, and his friend not seeming to think the circumstance remarkable enough to elicit any notice, though varying from his own domestic economy.

"That 'll do," said Mr. Balshawe, as his wife placed water, glasses, a flask of brandy, and pipes, on the table; "that 'll do. Now, make thysel' scarce; go to roost, and, I say, Mag, mind th' parlour's ready in good time i' th' mornin'; and stir your chalks, woman, and make those lazy husseys do it too. I mean to have some old cronies to dinner to-morrow, and mind, I 'll have no slammacking and shirking o' work, but a right good dinner, well got.—There—be off."

And this charming, but not unique specimen of the "Cotton-aristocracy," and of the

Reformed legislature of our country, was left alone with his friend.

Their conversation was long and confidential, for the subject was one in which their interests were deeply concerned. Mr. Langshawe, as a kind of connecting link between the concentrated interests of the great commercial mart and the scattered manufacturers of the surrounding districts, was well acquainted with the peculiarities of both; and it was in order to obtain the views of the influential manufacturers in these scattered districts on the present posture of affairs, that he made his present visit. He knew of old the cool and calculating mind and the shrewd intellect of his quondam friend, and he was quite sure that any opinions he might broach would be based on sufficient grounds.

From topics of general business, the friends digressed to other matters more strictly personal, having reference both to ancient days and to future prospects.

"Dost mind thee, Will, dost remember, man, a bill we got in from Gloddart and

Heartshaw? we were raw uns then, I reckon; dost remember,

To lbs. Cotton twist 60 hank, . £ — „ — „ —
To ditto ditto, . £ — „ — „ —

and we knew the first line well enough, but couldn't make out the second. And thou comes to me, and thou says, 'Hast thou had any ditto?' — 'No,' says I, 'I 've had no ditto.' — 'I 've had none neither,' says you; 'I can't make it out!' — 'Oh!' says thou, a minute or two after, 'I 'll tell thee what it is — I have it now, man: *ditto*'s the same repeated—the same over again, man—and we *had* two parcels o' twist.' We 've learned summat since then, I reckon."*

Mr. Langshawe laughed his assent, and the old friends got on merrily: they became more and more communicative — more and more confidential; till at length the host started the possibility of there being a community of interests between them by a matrimonial connection between their families.

* This improbable-looking incident is fact.

And could Mr. Langshawe for one moment listen to such a proposal for his gentle and beautiful girl? his only child—the very pride and delight of his heart? He could, he did; but there were various causes to render this circumstance less enormous to him than it seems to us.

He and Mr. Balshawe had begun life together, and he knew well that such in acquirement, in style, and in manner, as Mr. Balshawe was now, had *nearly* all the peers of the Cottonocracy been in youth; though many like himself, from the circumstance of much travelling, (for business had taken him much abroad,) and from perpetual intercourse with the intelligent inhabitants of the principal manufacturing towns, had become civilized in manners and usages; while some few had taken a higher flight, and become in fact and in habit gentlemen. But those who, like Mr. Balshawe, had lived in secluded districts, had been the suns of a little sphere, the lords paramount among the artizans whom their manufactories supported, and of the small shopkeepers around;

and whose fiat could at once throng these shops with customers, or deprive them entirely of support—even if indeed, as was often the case, they were not themselves *de facto* the real owners of them—such men became demigods in their several districts. They had none to coerce, none to restrain them by precept or example where none other was on equal terms. They were frequently the only magistrates of their district, and interpreted the law as it pleased them. Such plenitude of power did not soften an arbitrary disposition, nor render a hasty temper more gentle; and unless gifted with great natural goodness, these mushroom princes oftener enacted the tyrannical despot than the considerate master in their domain. Such was Mr. Balshawe, and such Mr. Langshawe knew him to be; but he attributed his faults to accidental causes, his virtues,—*i. e.* his wealth, his influence, his station, he *knew* to be the result of that shrewd and logical brain, that calculating mind and that unflinching industry, by which he himself

had also risen, and which he esteemed as the first and noblest attributes of man.

With all Mr. Balshawe's overwhelming vulgarity, Mr. Langshawe knew that parental pride had caused him to have his son well educated, or at least sent to expensive schools ; and he was more pleased than otherwise to find that the young man had not imbibed any very inordinate taste for literature. Such taste Mr. Langshawe thought quite incompatible with business habits,—such habits as he flattered himself were Mr. John Balshawe's, when he found that if not occupied in travelling for the firm abroad, he was regular in his attendance at the manufactory at home. He did not know that he was a low-lived libertine, carrying, in the indulgence of his brutal pleasures, shame and sorrow to the lowly hearths of those whom his father was bound by every tie of decency and morality to protect and cherish. Too often is this the case with the half-fledged sons of these secluded petty princes, who carry on a wasting warfare upon the morality and domestic comfort of their

petty localities. Mr. Langshawe was well acquainted with this general fact, and deplored it; for he was a man of kind heart, and of rigid morality; a pattern of liberality and kindness and propriety in his domestic establishment, and of justice in his mercantile one. His operatives respected him, his domestics loved him. But even more than he lamented these and other debasing circumstances for their immorality, did he deplore them because of the disparaging shade they cast over the "cotton system"; that system which he thought the most magnificent triumph of humanity; and he knew that this, at any rate, was one of the depreciating evils which the legislature, with its now vast infusion of mercantile wealth into it, dare not grapple with and put down.

Never once dreaming of the possibility, not to say probability, of the son of his old friend (who was quite unknown to him) being one of these libertines, Mr. Langshawe quickly followed up the idea which had been started of a union between their families, and of the satisfaction and advantages therefrom deriv-

able. Not that he had the slightest idea then of coercing the affections of his gentle girl; but the projected match had so many advantages every way, that if, as he did not suffer himself to doubt, the young man was an agreeable one, it was more than likely that Edith would without repugnance accommodate herself to his wishes.

So the two old men replenished their tumblers and laid down their plans. They were both, they thought, getting to an age when less responsibility and care would be agreeable, and they would resign the staff of authority into younger and stronger hands, and sit by in their arm-chairs and superintend. And this they did really persuade themselves was their intention, even while they were planning the construction of a new mill on a much larger scale than either possessed now, on a piece of ground admirably adapted for the purpose, which belonged to Mr. Balshawe, and was not very far distant from his present works. To this each was to contribute his quota of thousands, and his share of active

superintendence; and here was Mr. John Balshawe, having married his fair wife, to be planted as nominal ruler, though in reality under the rigid *surveillance* of two lynx-eyed viceroys. And then they drew golden calculations for future days, of bargains to be made, of dunces to be outreached, of speculations to be hazarded, of risks to be run, and of certain profits to accrue, forgetting that ere, even according to their own sunny calculation, any of these golden visions could be realized, their capacity for enjoying them must in the natural course of things, if not annihilated by death, be destroyed by the benumbing torpor of age. Nor can it be said that they were thus planning out of philanthropical love for their descendants. Mr. Balshawe's family was reduced to one,—Mr. Langshawe had never had more; and these children were already heirs to more thousands than an uncalculating head could reckon; to more wealth than they were able to spend with any propriety and consistency in the station to which they had been brought up.

No; the two old gentlemen, while they made their children the apparent motive of their plans, were in reality only indulging a habit which had become second nature to them. Their whole souls were wrapped up in mercantile speculation; and while they were indeed of an age to require relaxation, and had in reality no earthly motive for extraordinary exertion, since they yearly laid aside a much larger sum than they spent, did still toil day after day as regularly, as elaborately, as if they really had to earn their daily food.

CHAPTER IX.

A COTTON-MAN'S DINNER, NOT AN *EVERY*-DAY CONCERN.

"Thus we play the fools with the time; and the spirits of the wise sit in the clouds and mock us."

SHAKSPEARE.

"WHAT, in the name of Heaven, makes the governor in such a devil of a hurry?" was the elegant interrogation of Mr. John Balshawe, as his mother made her appearance for the third time at his bed-side, to summon him to his father's presence.

"I don't know what he wants," replied his mother; "but really, John, you ought to come; it is very late, and your father—"

"Now, my dear mother, don't fatigue yourself; I suppose my honoured father wants to blow me up for something or other, and really

one sermon a day is as much as my nerves will support. Now, pray—" continued he, seeing that his mother was about to speak again, " I regret,—but I 'm under the necessity of requesting that you will cut your stick."

And so this affectionate and well-trained son prepared to rise. He did not in the least hurry himself in his operations, nor did the anticipation of the forthcoming paternal reproof cause him to bestow a whit the less time and attention on the duties of the toilet; and as Mr. John Balshawe was a very personable young man; as he had sufficient wit to be fully aware of the circumstance, and sufficient discretion to employ a first-rate tailor, he really looked, when fully equipped, a young man of whom any father might be proud. And his father was proud of him. To be sure, a close and disinterested observer might have traced, even in his young face, lines and lineaments which indicated rather sensuality and selfishness than that undisguised and generous frankness which should dwell on the open brow of youth. But his father was

not a close and disinterested observer, and the appearance and "outward man" of his son and heir, as he now stood before him, were such as to give him undiminished satisfaction.

Mr. Balshawe opened his communication with somewhat more of the reserve of an experienced tactician than might have been expected from so downright a character. For, sooth to say, John Balshawe, senior, esquire, of Broomshaw Lodge, proprietor of one of the largest mills in the country, one of her Majesty's justices of the peace for the county of Lancaster, and still holding a commission in a yeomanry corps—a tyrant to his wife, a despot over his workpeople, and a person of no slight influence around — this potent personage did yet stand in a sort of awe of his hopeful son and heir. Yet it was not that awe which is inspired by involuntary respect, for his son deserved none; and, grown to man's estate as he was, the father would yet not have hesitated to impose the most absolute commands on indifferent subjects, with the

full intention of seeing them immediately obeyed, or of proceeding to any extremities to enforce obedience. But it was the innate conviction that in certain matters Mr. John had as absolute a will of his own as his father could possibly have, and as absolute a method of enforcing it too; and it was a sort of tacit and well-understood, though unspoken agreement which, preventing certain points and opinions and habits from being canvassed, had hitherto kept the father and son on good terms during the daily routine of life. Now Mr. Balshawe was perfectly aware that marriage was a subject on which his son would not bear the shadow of dictation; but he trusted to certain well-known points in his character for a favourable reception of his present proposal. He very carefully laid before his son the plan he had been cogitating, taking care to give the whole rather the semblance of a project passing through his own mind, than of one of which he had actually fixed the details. But he rather overshot the mark; the son perceived by his father's unwonted caution that

more was meant than met the ear, and he played his part accordingly. He listened with the most stoical indifference; he moved not a muscle, he raised not an eyelid, he uttered not a syllable. At length the father closed his long-winded oration, and then Mr. John, without raising his eyes and almost without opening his lips, articulated,

"And who may be the happy lady, sir?"

"The only daughter and heiress of Mr. Langshawe, of Lime Grove."

"Miss Langshawe!" cried he, springing up, "by Jupiter, sir, she's the prettiest girl in Lancashire!"

"She has above a hundred thousand pounds!" replied the father.

The matter was settled. The young gentleman was docile directly. He had seen Miss Langshawe at an archery ball given in the neighbourhood a short time before, and was dying to be introduced to her, but did not succeed. Her extreme beauty flashed vividly on his recollection; he was not of a constitution to be indifferent to that; he remem-

bered the devoted attentions paid to her by others, from whom it would be the greatest gratification to him to bear off the prize; and, finally, one hundred thousand pounds was a sum the very idea of which made Mr. John Balshawe's fingers to tingle, and his heart to heave.

"But, John," said Mr. Balshawe, who, now that his son so heartily met his views, thought that he might assume a little of the mood paternal, "you 're not to consider this matter as settled. Old Langshawe doats on his daughter, as well as his money, and he 'll not give her to a rake if he knows it. And I fear me, Jack, thou 'rt rather inclined that way; only thou 'rt very young, and marriage I hope may settle thee."

"Never doubt it, sir; not the least fear of it. I 'll be as proper and as pious as a parson; go to church twice on a Sunday, have family prayers at home, and look as demure as a saint. By Jove! won't I cut a swell! D—n my eyes, if she isn't—"

"Hush, John! is swearing the way to reform?"

"By Jupiter, sir! I was only giving out a little ejaculation of thanksgiving in the style of my honoured father; 'honour thy father,' you know, sir: that is, walk in his steps; that is, swear as he does: but if you seriously disapprove, sir, of those little deprecatory ejaculations, I must presume you use them as the Spartans made their Helots drunk;—but I forget, my dear sir, you perhaps never heard of the Spartans?"

"One thing I never heard, sir. I never heard so impudent a tongue in all my born days. But come to breakfast, Jack, and mind thy Ps and Qs."

"By Jove!" soliloquised the hopeful son, as his father left the room; "by the living Jingo! I didn't give the old codger credit for so much wit: he's up to a thing or two yet, the old hunks! Miss Langshawe! by Heaven! the finest woman in Lancashire! the toast of the county for miles round! and a hundred thousand pounds! Whew! won't I go it?"

And the accomplished young man followed his sire.

As ordained the night before, breakfast was served in one of the parlours, and, as usual, Mrs. Balshawe waited at the table, but her task was rendered lighter than ordinary by the good-humoured demeanour of her husband, and the gay jokes of her son. The latter was, however, quite upon his good behaviour: he could be courteous if he chose it, and he did choose it; moreover, his knowledge of business was not superficial, and his remarks on the sudden fall in cotton, with its probable influence on the markets and on trade in general, the different qualities of twist, &c. &c., surprised and delighted Mr. Langshawe; and when we add to this his prepossessing appearance, to a person who saw him under advantageous circumstances, we cannot wonder that that gentleman was, on the whole, anything but disposed to withdraw from his half-formed agreement of the night before.

It had been Mr. Langshawe's intention, who had merely come to consult his friend about a matter of business, to return on the forenoon of this day; but Mr. Balshawe

formed no exception to the hospitable race amongst and with whom he had risen. The love of ostentatious display, which is so prominent a feature of the Cottonocracy, is dignified and adorned by a hearty and genuine hospitality, which is a prevailing characteristic of the county. The magnificence of the cotton lords has become a theme for general satire, and deservedly so; still it is admitted on all hands, that their magnificence, however ostentatious, is *real:* their gold, *is* gold; their silver, silver: they do not sport tinsel. And it is not to be wondered at that he who in his youth dined off pewter, or made one at his master's table where a round bowl of porridge in the centre served alike for the master of the house, his family, and his apprentices—it is not wonderful that such a one should look with more complacency on the gorgeous service of plate which his own hands have procured, than if, from being accustomed to it from his cradle, it should hardly have struck him to remark its beauty. The rising generation, educated in a better style and habi-

tuated from childhood to more civilized usages, may redeem this flaw in the character of the race, if, indeed — and this is the opinion of many well qualified to judge — if, indeed, gentlemanly habits, delicate feelings, and cultivated minds, are not inconsistent with success in Manchester trade. That there are successful tradesmen who possess these refining characteristics is well known, but they are considered only as the exceptions that prove the rule; and so strongly does this prejudice— if prejudice it be—still exist, that on 'Change a man of education and refined manners is looked on as an animal to be stared at and pitied. And so long as the cotton trade exists, it is very possible that the gentleman will be surpassed in the race by the low-born mechanic, whose powers of calculation are not checked, and whose shrewdness in worldly things is not clogged, nor his "push-on, keep-moving" course not impeded, by any of those delicate embarrassments which might arise in a refined and cultivated mind.

But to return. The hearty and unbounded

hospitality which is the characteristic of Lancashire society, amongst high or low, rich or poor, prevailed to its full extent in the mansion of Mr. Balshawe. His lady (save the mark !) did not often indeed publicly exercise it. She gave a dance, now-and-then, when her really beautiful mansion shone in all its splendour ; and ostentatious carriages, attended by servants in glittering liveries, deposited their over-dressed burthens at her portal. Then was the good lady busy and bustling; then did rich and luxurious condiments pass round, and costly wines vanish like smoke ; and then, after a few hours, the wearied ladies and their wine-soaked escorts departed; the entertaining rooms received the necessary purifications, the mistress heartily helping her maids in the accustomed task; the silken hangings were carefully folded and laid by; the luxurious ottomans were ensconced in their brown holland covers; the glittering gewgaws were placed in a snug chest; and the smart albums were carefully enfolded in paper; and the meek mistress and her purse-proud lord resumed their

accustomed posts in the kitchen. Mrs. Balshawe's hospitality during the remainder of the year had a less conspicuous but a more valuable range. Her proud elevation of purse had not in the least affected the natural simplicity of her character; her former co-mates were always sure of a welcome and a meal at her fireside; and her charity to the poor was, like that of numbers of her class, unwearied and unbounded. Thus she held on *her* way. Her husband's—besides the changes that business enforced—was more varied by pleasure-engagements. He frequently dined out, and entertained friends at home; and it was for one of these accustomed engagements that he insisted on Mr. Langshawe's stay till the following morning.

"Hang it man, you shanna go: burst me if you shall! What! tell me that Bill Langshawe's grown craven, and is afeard to crush a bottle with a friend!"

And he did stay, though much disappointed to find that his son-in-law elect had an imperative engagement elsewhere. The dinner was

luxurious; the wines the finest and most costly that money could procure, and no inferior ones were introduced. Mr. Langshawe was not afraid of a bottle or two of wine; but at a latish hour, feeling that he had had enough, he rose with the view of quietly effecting his retreat. His host caught a glimpse of his receding figure, and rushed after him, calling on his friends for assistance. This was speedily obtained; the culprit was brought back *vi et armis*, and pushed down into his chair. The servant was ordered to close the shutters and curtains against the intruding beams of daylight, fresh decanters were put on the table, and plentiful refreshments placed within reach; and the waiter, having done all this with the air of one not unaccustomed to the task, was told to "make himself scarce, and be d—d to him." The master of the feast locked the door, and put the key in his pocket: returning to the table he filled a bumper, and requiring all to honour his toast, immediately gave out the elegant sentiment—"DAMNATION TO ALL SKULKERS."

Then commenced the peculiar luxuries of a manufacturing gentleman of the *out-districts*. Boxes of cigars had been placed upon the table; pipes and tobacco were in readiness for those who preferred the unsophisticated herb; and costly claret, drunk, not from a miserable wine-glass, but from goblets—kept clear the throats of these thorough-going sons of profligacy. The night passed gloriously; riotous songs and unequivocal jests sweetened the wine, or rather the tobacco; for flavour of course the wine had none, to men whose throats were as so many chimneys; and if their free libations to Bacchus did kindle "a row" and a fight at this end of the table; or induced a sudden secession from chair to floor among some of the weaker-organed, the skirmish and the fall were alike unheeded. Of the combatants it was but for the weaker "to give in;" and for the man who couldn't drink all night, but must needs tumble from his chair, why it was by universal acclaim decreed that he had better lie there. Nor did the gradually-increasing bustle beyond the

still-locked door, which told that Mrs. Balshawe and her assistants were up and busy in their preparation for another day's business, stop the coarse and vociferous hilarity. Coffee and ale, anchovies, deviled goose, and red herrings were called in; palled palates were forced into sickly activity again, and the carousal was renewed for the day.

Towards night, some of the younger profligates, the consequences of whose absence from "th' mill" or "th' warehouse" during the day began to glimmer upon their consciences with a potency above that of the wine, quietly stole away. The elders followed—by nine o'clock the house was empty, and Peter was called to carry to his bed—there, in all probability, to lie for a fortnight—the *hospitable* purveyor of this banquet, who for some hours had sat on his chair,—to all appearance awake, but silent, helpless, motionless, save in an occasional heavy waving of the head,—a disgusting picture of brutal excess.*

* If it be thought this picture is overdrawn, I can only reply that it was sketched to me by a gentleman who was accidentally a guest at one of these degrading revelries.

CHAPTER X.

A COTTON-MAN IN A PASSION.

"No means were found
Could bring him round,
And give him a rehearance."
Gent's Mag.

Mr. Walmsley set out on his ride one morning, not indeed with the exact intention of going to the house at Lime Grove, but certainly without any very absolute vow against it. When, however, he came within view of the belt of fine old trees, from which the estate had received its name, he perceived Miss Langshawe walking in their shade, accompanied by a gentleman, whom he would have recognised by his portly appearance, even if the energetic "haw, haw," had not already reached his ears. Frank alighted and eagerly joined them.

"So, Mr. Walmsley, you are seeking inspiration from the country; the sweet sights and pleasant sounds, the verdant lawns and sunny meads!"

"My inspiration is *here*," said Frank, quietly, but emphatically.

"Truly," said Mr. Ashworth, looking towards the trees under which they were, "she is *sub-lime:* haw, haw!"

"That is so vile a pun," said Edith, "as scarcely to be tolerated, even from you."

"From whom even vile things are tolerable, you mean?"

"No; I didn't mean that."

"Well, Miss Langshawe, I can easily conceive that I am intolerable *now*, haw! haw! Good morning!"

And before the disconcerted Edith could stop him, he was really gone, much to the satisfaction of Walmsley, who could not resist the opportunity thus afforded of pleading more earnestly than he had hitherto done for a favourable answer to his heart-cherished

hopes. Edith, thus taken by surprise, though she did not accord all he wished, felt it yet impossible to withhold some degree of encouragement. Her own feelings and wishes were all in his favour; but she had an inward presentiment, if not indeed something more than that, that her father might not so easily be won over from his own peculiar opinions. This internal struggle of feeling was very evident in her agitated countenance. Her lover thought this agitation no unfavourable sign; had his suit been quite indifferent to her, there had been no call for either delay or perplexity in rejecting it.

"My dearest Miss Langshawe, you permit me to hope—say that you do; I pray you, say so!"

"I am afraid to say so, Mr. Walmsley."

"Why, dear Edith, why?"

"I am afraid—I fear—perhaps—my father might not—"

"Might not approve of my suit, you would say."

"Yes."

Notwithstanding his philosophical determination not to be swayed by the chimerical objections which his uncle, Mr. Ainsley, had raised, that gentleman's vaticinations, nevertheless, dwelt on Walmsley's mind; that part of them which intimated his own possible unacceptableness to Mr. Langshawe, now suddenly recurred to his memory, and crimsoned his face with no very pleasant emotion. But there was a counter-influence which soon resumed its sway; Edith did not refer to her own objections but to her father's; the lover could not but draw a hopeful inference from this circumstance.

"Why should your father be unpropitious to me? Is it my rank, my family?—he might undoubtedly look higher for you."

"Oh, no: it is not that."

"My character, I trust—"

"Is irreproachable, he readily allows."

"And fortune I shall not want, even if I do not achieve it, which I feel to be not impossible when I think of you."

"I do not think he would mind that."

"These objections, then, dear Edith—they are surely not insuperable?"

"I hope not."

"Bless you! bless you! for that hope," he exclaimed, with so much ardour as first to awaken Edith to a full sense of all that might be implied from her words. Though thus unwittingly betrayed into giving more decided encouragement to her lover than she had intended to do unsanctioned by her father, she could not bring herself to recal it. She scorned affectation in every shape, and she felt that in her very heart of hearts she wished her father's prejudices to be overcome.

But the happy Walmsley, in the proud enthusiasm of the moment, totally forgot the numerous obstacles "on both sides the house" which must be subdued ere he could bring his wishes to a successful termination, and gave himself up to delighted anticipations and glowing descriptions of future happiness, to which Edith, tearful, yet pleased, listened in silence.

Their glowing hopes were quickly quenched in disappointment.

Mr. Langshawe, fevered with the effects of his debauch at Mr. Balshawe's, vexed at the loss of time it had entailed, angry with himself for having given way to it, and not insensible to the degrading influence of such low-lived revels —was just in that amiable state of mind which disposes a person to see cause for anger and vexation in every circumstance that occurs around him. Few are those happy persons who can look through their past lives without some recollection of a similar state of feeling, induced in many, nay, in all cases, by the tacit though it may be unacknowledged, promptings of a self-reproaching conscience. We fly from self-examination, and endeavour to drown the upbraiding voice within, by a lynx-eyed investigation of the crimes and follies of our neighbours.

Considering the state of mind and of feeling in which he then was; considering also the peculiar nature of part of his conference with Mr. Balshawe, it is not surprising that when Mr. Langshawe, on approaching his own neighbourhood, saw his daughter and Mr.

Walmsley advancing, and engaged in such close and interesting conversation, that he was within a very few paces of them ere they had any idea of his proximity—it is not surprising that he should look on this accidental meeting as a concerted one, and that he should give instant credence to a supposition which flashed on his mind, of its only being one, perhaps, of a series of such interviews, calculated in the upshot to thwart his long-cherished hopes, and to annihilate his newly-formed plan. In a perfect storm of passion he dismounted from his horse, and rudely drawing his daughter's arm from Mr. Walmsley's, he placed it within his own, telling the latter gentleman "that he was much obliged by his considerate attention to his daughter, whom, however, he *at present* felt fully equal himself to protect."

Astounded at his rudeness, and maddened at his sneer, Walmsley attempted some sort of expostulation, but his voice was lost in the thundering invectives of the father, which were quickly exciting him to all the forgetfulness of wrath, when Edith interposed. She was as

pale as death, and trembled like a leaf; but though for a moment she spoke inarticulately, her voice quickly gained distinctness and firmness.

"Father, you do me injustice; this meeting was purely accidental; and was unexpected both by Mr. Walmsley and myself."

His daughter's words, combined with the open and truthful look she cast upon him, disarmed the angry father; and he contented himself with telling Mr. Walmsley in more measured terms, that the views he entertained for his daughter were totally incompatible with attentions which, it had not escaped his observation, the young gentleman had been paying her, and which must now entirely cease. To this he added, that under such circumstances, Mr. Walmsley would do well to discontinue his usual calls at Lime Grove.

Frank, with a lip quivering with suppressed vexation, inquired if the young lady's feelings and wishes were to be totally unconsidered in this arrangement.

"That point, sir, my daughter and I can decide without your assistance."

The lover approached his mistress as if to take her hand—a movement which renewed the father's ire at once.

"Begone, sir, instantly; and leave her."

"I will not: from no lips but her own will I take a rejection. Edith, dearest Edith! I will not molest you; I will not even come near you, until your father relents, if you will only say you do not give me up so hastily."

Sobs, still more convulsive, were Edith's only answer, as she leaned against the trunk of a tree.

"She will say nothing of the kind. Edith listen to me, to your father! I have reasons with which you are unacquainted for disapproving of Mr. Walmsley's addresses, and I desire—as your parent I have a right to do so,—that you will reject them at once, and for ever! Edith, do you hear me?" resumed he, more sternly.

"Time, father; give me time," murmured she.

"No time like the present," returned Mr. Langshawe, whose ire was rapidly rising again. Through the influence of the jaundiced temper and imagination which, at the present unhappy moment, made him view everything through a distorted medium, he fancied some covert meaning implied in these simple words.

"No time like the present. If you marry this young man, Edith, you forfeit every guinea of my money; that, perhaps, in your childish folly you may despise: but you will forfeit my blessing also, for it shall never go with a disobedient child. I *command* you to discard Mr. Walmsley. Will you obey me?"

Edith had ceased weeping, but was still leaning, pale and almost exhausted, against the tree. She raised her eyes with a supplicating glance to her father's countenance, but she read no symptoms of relenting there; and at length she feebly uttered, "I will obey you, sir."

"You promise?"

"I do!"

Walmsley stood an instant as if irresolute, and then abruptly darting past to where his horse was tied, he threw himself on its back and galloped away as if he were mad.

Mr. Langshawe threw the bridle of his horse over his arm, and prepared to assist his daughter home; and much did she need it, for she was faint, trembling, and utterly exhausted. With the most tender care he assisted her, and letting his horse go loose as soon as he was within the precincts of his own domain, he supported her to the house, and even to the door of her own chamber, where he left her, saying that he would send her mother to her. But when Mrs. Langshawe—having heard from her husband that he had had "a settling row" with young Walmsley, and of course the poor child was foolish and fretting,—came to her daughter's chamber, she found the door fastened against even her intrusion; and Edith was for many hours alone.

When she re-appeared in the parlour her father gave her a quick keen glance, and saw that her face though pale, had its wonted composure, her manners their accustomed cheerful steadiness. There was, indeed, none of her sunny joyousness, and there was, every now and then, a nervous tremor which seemed to shake her; but the latter was but occasional and transient, and the former Mr. Langshawe allowed to himself he could not expect so soon. He did not know, and he did not think of the bitter mental struggles his daughter had undergone; and he put a comfortable *salvo* on his conscience from the sight of her outward composure and placid cheerfulness.

"It will pass over her," thought he, "more lightly even than I could have hoped."

And nothing could exceed the affectionate regard and attention evinced by both father and daughter towards each other throughout the evening of that memorable day.

CHAPTER XI.

AN "OPERATIVE" AND HIS FAMILY.

"Born
Life's daily tasks with them to share
Who, whether from their lowly bed
They rise, or rest the weary head,
Ponder the blessing they entreat
From Heaven, and *feel* what they repeat,
While they give utterance to *that* prayer
That *asks for daily bread.*"

WORDSWORTH.

CERTAINLY a more complete contrast in abode could hardly exist than that exhibited by the palace inhabited by Mrs. Langshawe, and the cabin occupied by her less fortunate cousin, Mrs. Halliwell. It was not the less remarkable, because it is so common. Nowhere do extremes meet more glaringly than in London, where houses that might almost vie with Alad-

din's palace in splendour, do absolutely touch upon dens of the utterest filth, misery, wretchedness and crime. But these are peculiarities, and are marked as such, when known ; in Lancashire this contrast is so evident a consequence of " the system," and is of such universal occurrence that it is hardly remarked.

In Lancashire, too, so bountifully has Nature diffused one of her greatest blessings, that the poorest and humblest cabin derives a gleam of comfort from that which the wretched Londoner dare not think of—a glowing coal-fire. Oh ! in age or sickness it is almost more comforting than the food necessary to existence.

Mrs. Halliwell lived in one of a row of cottages which had risen with a hundred more in the immediate neighbourhood of a large mill. The road or street was not paved, and was consequently miserable ; the cottages had each a little court or garden in front, from the state of which might easily be guessed the character of the occupant of the cottage attached : some were mere receptacles of filth,

and excrement, and noisome pools of stagnant water: others were kept in comparatively decent order; and here and there was one, and amongst these Mrs. Halliwell's was most conspicuous, which exhibited neat and wholesome flower-beds, or plots of herbs. Numberless were the broken windows in the row, and various were the modes in which the unwelcome gaps were filled up; and various, indeed, and in many instances most unsightly, were the groups of inhabitants clustered here and there for a gossip on the fine evening. Some looked healthy, many were squalid: some few were clean and respectable, but many also looked filthy and disreputable. Amid the throngs of the cotton operatives, as in Milton's Pandemonium, "the mind is its own place."

May we not hope that the earnest measures which have been of late resorted to by some of the most eminent mill-holders, to give some degree of cultivation to the minds and habits of the children they employ, may cause henceforth the *generality* of the operatives' habita-

tions to be such as the one which now we are describing — not from fancy — we have seen, and know it well.

About the centre, then, of the row of cottages to which we have referred, was one of which the garden-court was arranged with the utmost neatness, and the flower-beds filled with common but fragrant and carefully-tended flowers. Climbing-plants were likewise trained round the cottage-door, which stood open, and the window was filled with pots of geraniums. The ground-floor consisted of the loom-shop, the kitchen, and a small wash-house or pantry. Here, evening though it be, the work does not seem to be over, you are literally deafened on entering, and not being able to hear, you must be content to see.

By the fire is a hearty-looking woman, washing a roaring youngster of two years, before she puts him to bed; the baby lies awake in the cradle; a girl of five years old is attempting with most laughable propriety, to arrange the night toilet of a brother a few months younger, who demurs magnani-

mously. A little apart are two rather bigger boys, each with a large wheel before them "winding." If you peep into the clay-floored loom-shop, which opens out of the kitchen, you will see four looms, three of which are going with full activity, the idle one being that which the mother claims during any cessation of attendance on her nine children. You think that even the roarings of the rebellious youngster are musical to the noise which now deafens you; but in an instant it is hushed: the father has seen you, and comes forward, having first made a signal to the others to stop—a hearty boy and girl, who follow him.

He himself looks pale and sickly; but his family, he says, are quite hearty; and, indeed, they look so.

He attributes much of this to their working under his own eye, at home. A parent may contrive gentle relaxations to individuals, when necessary, without encroaching materially on the necessary quantity of labour. In a fac-

tory, this is impossible. Let a master be ever so kindly disposed, the great magician, Steam, is absolute and inflexible in his exactions; and while he is "on" the appointed labourers must not slacken their exertions. Still, as Joe Halliwell now said, the mill has its advantages: you earn much higher wages there than you can by any degree of labour acquire at home. "That," he said, "took his Nancy to the mill, and though he would fain have had her content at home, she fancied she should do better there, so he would not forbid her. It was time now, though, she should be coming home."

And here she is at the threshold.

But only for an instant: she merely lays her bundle on the chair, gives a good-humoured glance and nod around, and retreats, without giving time for the question or remonstrance which she seems to anticipate from her mother. Mrs. Halliwell coloured deeply with vexation, and turned to her husband.

"Joe, I wish you'd follow Nancy."

"Follow her, what for? she 's only gone for a walk, I suppose; and what can she do better this fine evening?"

"Nothing: if she 's in proper company; but somehow my mind misgives me."

"Pooh, pooh! woman; you fidget yourself for nothing; our Nance will take care of herself, I 'll warrant."

And so the father addressed himself entirely to a romp with his baby, whom he had at once taken from the cradle; and the mother, not liking to say more before her wondering children, smothered her anxiety as well as she could.

Meantime Nancy eluded the chit-chat of her neighbours as quickly as she had the catechising of her mother, and threading her way down two or three broken streets or lanes, similar to the one we have described, soon gained the fields, and proceeded at a rapid pace across some of them till she reached a gate, which opened on a bye-road to the factory in which she worked. She was not first at the trysting-place; a genteel-looking well-

dressed young man, who was leaning carelessly over it, switching it with his cane—a token of deep mental occupation—and whistling at the same time "for want of thought," roused himself on seeing her approach, and advanced with alacrity to meet her.

"Ah, Nancy, my dear," said he, "I was afraid you were going to disappoint me. What a time I have waited."

"I couldn't help it, indeed; for I was obliged to go all the way round by our own cottage, for fear the other folk from the mill should suspect anything."

"You did very right, very properly, Nancy; and you 're a very thoughtful, good girl."

"But, Mr. John, why should we keep it all so close?"

"It is better, my love, much better."

"You swore you meant honorably by me;" somewhat excited.

"I swear it again, love."

"And you mean to marry me?"

"Can you doubt it?"

"I don't doubt it—I don't doubt it," said she, at length, re-assured by his earnest protestations; "but, then, I don't see what need there is of all this secrecy."

"My dear Nancy, there is great need of it. Do you think I would require it, if it was not necessary? In fact, if it does get known, I shan't be able to marry you; and you know what a blow that will be to both of us."

"It would, indeed," said poor Nancy, panic-struck. "If I might only tell my mother," faltered she, "I should be content."

"It cannot be, Nancy; and if you torment me thus, I shall be obliged to give you up."

"Oh no, no, no!"

"Why, are you not unreasonable?" said he, still crossly. "Don't I promise to make you a lady, give you all sorts of fine things, and money without end? and all I ask is that you should keep our meetings secret for a little while, and you refuse me!"

"No, no, I don't refuse," said she, weep-

ing; "and you promise it's only for a little while?"

"That I do, my girl, that I do." And now having sufficiently alarmed her, he condescended to be lover-like again, and by working on her pride as he well knew how, and drawing inflated pictures of the grandeur and consequence to be hers after a while, he succeeded as usual in engaging her strict acquiescence in his injunctions, one of which was, that she should still keep up appearances with her humbler lover, Jem Forshaw.

This grated upon Nancy's better feelings, which were deadened, but not yet extinguished, by the false and injurious pride which was destroying the pure and healthy part of her nature; but she yielded.

"And, perhaps," said she, when they were going to part, and her lover's flatteries had wrought her vanity to the highest pitch, "perhaps, then, next Christmas, I may be riding in my own carriage, like my grand cousin?"

"No doubt of it, love; but who is your grand cousin?"

"Why, didn't you know? I 'm of a good family: Mrs. Langshawe of Lime Grove 's my cousin."

"The devil!"—

This interjection was lost on Nancy, who was pre-occupied with the grandeur of her family tree.

"So you see, Mr. John, you won't match so unequal after all."

A hasty kiss was "Mr. John's" only reply to this vaunt; as he turned quickly away to hide his consternation from Nancy, and to take counsel with his own thoughts in this dilemma.

"Who the devil could have thought it?" was uttered as a sort of "escape-valve" to the torrent of his thoughts. For a little while they were sufficiently perplexed. To pursue his designs on Miss Langshawe's cousin at the same time that he was affecting honourable courtship to the lady herself, was not to be thought of; yet, to give up Nancy—the pretty, pouting, saucy, *piquante* Nancy—really, it was a hard case.

So Mr. John Balshawe walked and thought, and thought and walked; and it may be that, in due time, the result of his deliberations will be made known to the reader.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RISE OF THE COTTONOCRACY.

" ' Describe the Borough'—though our idle tribe
May love description, can we so describe ?"

CRABBE.

GOOD reader! suffer me now to introduce you to the presiding genius of our district; to the favourite haunt of a necromancer, to whom Aladdin's sprite was a nonentity—to whom the bright fairies of the East, and the fearful wizards of the North, were mere shufflers, and before whom all the mighty genii of all ages "hide their diminished heads." Of no sex, of no visible power; quiet in his operations, but mighty in his effects, this enchanter subverts the accustomed order of society; pulls one down and raises up an-

other, makes kings of dust, and counsellors of fools, and creates palaces in the wilderness and thronged cities in the desert. Of no beauty of countenance that we should admire, nor grandeur of appearance that we should wonder, but possessing that inward loveliness that passeth show, that internal power which sinks into nothingness all outward attributes, being, in fact, the wonderful alembic after which the world and all its philosophy have for ages run mad; the crucible to swallow dross and eject gold which Science has seen "through a glass darkly," and Credulity has viewed in a sunbeam brightly, and Avarice has clutched like his own shadow greedily; —this mighty potentate has fixed the cardinal points of his dominion in the length and breadth and depth of Manchester with a grasp and a certainty which only Cotton could assume. Cotton is lord of the ascendant in the Manchester house of destiny; or rather, Cotton is that creative, vivifying, radiating power, "Totus, teres, atque rotundus," from which emanate, the suns and stars and comets,

the life and light and being of the Manchester "system;" in short—THE COTTONOCRACY.*

Magnificent and marvellous indeed has been the rise of this, the "fifth estate" of the realm. A stranger surveying Manchester as it now exists,—its length, its breadth, its immense population; seeing its numerous and beautiful public institutions, and having some knowledge of its wealthy and intelligent population,—such a one would have some difficulty in realizing the picture which might be shown him of this "Metropolis of the North" a hundred years ago. *Then* the plain and plodding tradesman ate homely water-porridge with his apprentice. Then a young man was stigmatised as "a rake and a spendthrift" because he sent to the hotel for a pint of foreign wine to entertain a valued customer; and the only private carriages then seen or heard of, were three or four belonging to old families in the neigh-

* Those who are acquainted with Lancashire, will at once admit the propriety of our selecting Manchester as a fair specimen of the county at large, in all points referring to the sudden and amazing rise of the commerce of the county, and of the peculiarities which that commerce draws forth.

bourhood, of whom the habits were still so primitive, that of the owner of one of them it is recorded that she could not bring herself to countenance the newly-imported luxuries of tea and coffee, but when she visited her friends she was always regaled with a tankard of ale and a pipe. Great was the outcry, — for the circumstance was thought to forerun utter ruin or worse,—great was the outcry when in 1758 a successful tradesman set up a carriage of his own. Now, the remarkable circumstance is to see "a cotton-man" without one; and the accumulated mass of brains in the Herald's Office hardly suffices to invent armorial bearings fast enough. "Thank heaven," said an aristocrat, "they may build fine houses, and sport fine equipages, but they cannot purchase avenues of OLD OAKS wherewith to environ their mushroom palaces." It was thought a happy hit of the person who suggested as motto to the wealthy tobacconist's newly-assumed crest "Quid rides;" many of the Cottonocracy content themselves with less appropriate ones.

Formerly the few aristocratic inhabitants of Manchester made their way weekly with pattens and lantern to an assembly for cards and dancing, to which they subscribed the then ample sum of two shillings and sixpence per quarter! the Assembly was continued at, of course, an advancing rate of admission; but as great folks multiplied, unwonted inconveniences were experienced. In turning in a cotillon (waltzes had not reached Manchester then) the "whole piece" calico man was dodged by him who sold half a piece; and in a "*contre danse*," the lady of a warehouse proprietor found herself under the necessity of crossing hands with the sister of a shopkeeper. Such *rencontres* were not to be borne. It was not fitting that he who sold a single yard of calico at 16d. should have refreshment at the same table with him who was content to pocket 14d. provided his customer "took the piece together"; nor was it likely that he who under the rose "cut a piece" in his warehouse for a friend, should wriggle his heels in the same room with him who cut it openly in a retail shop.

Therefore, a very few years ago, *two* assemblies were instituted, the qualifications for admission to each being, as we were credibly informed, distinctly defined. The first was patronized by those who sold "a whole piece" of calico, and those who "cut it in two" went to the other. But clear as these arrangements seemed to be, it was not found easy to reduce them to practice, or at least, the scheme did not answer. The intelligent, wealthy, and respectable tradesman who measured out his cotton from behind a counter, thought it hard to be excluded from the haunts of men infinitely more vulgar than himself, because these held a measuring-yard in a warehouse instead of a shop! In fact the degradation was felt to be more than human flesh and blood could sustain; and the second assembly died a natural death. Painfully did the "exclusives" try to keep up the *caste* of the *first*, but in vain; "untoward" spirits would intrude, and though the Manchester Assemblies still exist, they are not remarkable for the presence, exclusively, of the "Heads of the Cottonocracy."

In ancient towns where "blood" and "family" are recognised and known, and rank has its clearly-defined and duly-admitted precedence, these anomalies do not occur; but in towns of sudden and manufacturing growth they are neither infrequent nor unamusing. It is an admitted axiom that the Manchester people "have no grandfathers"; it is surely, therefore, most praiseworthy in those who according to the existing state of things are all of them "heads of families," to endeavour to secure for themselves an elevated position in society. Hence, however, the bane of Manchester social life. Hence the custom of outvying each other even to folly. Hence the "out-Heroding Herod," in dress, in equipage, in entertainments, in luxury, in expense, and extravagance of every kind, which so often makes the "cotton-man," despite fifty redeeming qualities, the butt and the ridicule of those, from home, with whom he may chance to associate. "He is a cotton-man" seems to be a sufficient explanation for anything that may seem absurdly ostentatious or extrava-

gant; and it is a common by-word in the mouths of many who are themselves totally deficient both in the shrewdness to plan, or the unwearied energetic assiduity to realize, the undertakings which make the cotton manufacturer what he is. Of one stock, of one (so to speak) common parentage, all,—with very few exceptions, — in a fewer or greater number of years having risen from the soil by the machinations of those twin necromancers, — Cotton and Steam, the Cottonocracy generally have no other method of displaying to an admiring world the enviable elevation they have obtained in the scale of society, but by display and expense. It is very far from our meaning to depreciate the intelligence existing in Manchester,—we have lived amongst it, and we know it; but still it will we think be acknowledged by all fully acquainted with the place, that nowhere is money so influential as amongst the mass of Manchester society: nowhere does it cover such a multitude of sins—of ignorance.

It is a praiseworthy trait in the Cotton-

ocracy that they are proud of their trade; they are *not*, as a body, "ashamed of the shop;" and it was this laudable, though possibly in that particular instance, somewhat ill-displayed pride, which led them on a memorable occasion, to decorate a festival hall with miniature emblems of trade.* We know gentlemen, brothers, now in the enjoyment of every luxury that money can bestow, and also of those far higher gratifications which result from the esteem of the rich and the blessings of the poor, who frequently point out, near their princely mansion, the site of the humble cottage where their early years were spent.†

This feeling, though general, is of course not universal. A gentleman, an eminent banker, admirable in every circumstance of life,

* "I cannot even see those ornaments that have been placed there to pay a compliment to me—(here the Right Hon. Gent. pointed the attention of the company to some pastry models of steam machinery placed on the table immediately opposite to him)—I cannot see that shuttle without feeling myself deeply connected with it." (Tremendous cheering.) *The Times*, Oct. 7. 1828.

† Since the writing of this sketch death has been busy here.

and beloved and reverenced by all, on a certain wet and dirty day was proceeding homewards in his carriage, when he perceived two humble neighbours trudging through the rain. He stopped his carriage, and insisted on their taking seats in it, which they would fain have declined on the plea of being very wet. He insisted, however, and not only accommodated, but placed them quite at their ease. So much so, that one of them, a retired butcher—or as perhaps we ought to say "purveyor"—began to wax talkative, and recalled to the mind of the now great man their relative situations in early days. The theme was evidently not altogether agreeable, nevertheless the gentleman behaved as a gentleman, bowed and assented with silent suavity.

"And so I was a-saying, Mr. H——, ye warna always, ye know, the great man as ye are now. Aye, I can remember, many a time, comin' to th' little shop ye kept at th' corner of —— alley for an ounce o' tea; ye wur nobody much then, man. What i' th' name o' Heaven, Buckshaw, (turning suddenly

on his friend, who with more tact wished to check him) d 'ye keep pinchin' me that gate for ?"

The exemplification of the *otium cum dignitate* in this gentleman—the retired butcher we mean—was somewhat peculiar. He planted, he builded. His houses, one of which he occupied himself—" genteel" houses, in a row, with flower-parterres in front and kitchen-gardens behind—were much sought after by rheumatized ladies and elderly gentlemen, because out of due and necessary consideration to the goodly proportions—if proportion might be predicated of that which shape had none —of himself and his " missis," he had given to his forty guinea houses a width to the doorways and an easiness of ascent to the stairs which is not always to be met with in mansions of treble the rent. He was, moreover, a liberal and excellent landlord and neighbour, and therefore courted and welcomed as a visitor by tenants who in the conventional politeness of life were much his superiors. His prime relaxation was a barrel organ, in the purchase of which

he spared no expense, and to which he kept buying additional barrels. Every day he ground round his tunes once, from beginning to end, psalms and dances, jigs and hymns, at the same regular railroad speed; and having had "his music," as he somewhat curiously termed it, he was ready for the other duties of the day. The culture of his mind was by no means neglected. He had read the Encyclopedia through—regularly through—from the beginning to the end—from the first page to the last; and was now, in about his seventieth year, beginning the supplement, or as he called it, supple-ment.

His wife was not less methodical in her ways, though her occupations were less varied. Some little she might do about her house, but much bodily exertion could neither be agreeable nor convenient to her. For many consecutive hours every day she might be seen in her pretty parlour knitting. Every faculty was absorbed in the occupation, and her whole pride and delight—except the proportion which was run away with annually

by her transparently-preserved green gooseberries—were centered in having her husband's hose, gloves, and muffatees—all her own knitted manufacture—in superlative order. She was his third wife, and he was about seventy, but she often said "he 's sure to outlive me, and of course he 'll marry again; and I'm very anxious that the next Mrs. B——y, should at any rate find his stockings in good order;" and forthwith she would open the large drawer of a store wardrobe, and display it to her admiring listener, literally filled with stockings of her own knitting, which were hardly likely to be wanted for years, so liberally were his everyday depositories supplied. But this is a long digression.

"Do you know," said a gentleman, high in the *official* as well as in the private social circles of the town, to a bookseller, "do you know a writer named Tom Moore?"

"Oh yes."

"What has he written?"

"Oh, many things: Lalla Rookh, Hebrew Melodies, and "——

"Oh, very well: when he writes anything in English, send it me."

And another seeing a book lettered "Vicar of Wakefield."

"Th' Vicar o' Wakefield—who 's he? Oh, (answering his own question) some writer on church rates, I suppose."

Though these are true, and not altogether unique specimens of the literary qualifications of the senior race of Cottonocracy in the middle of the nineteenth century, yet these circumstances, and many peculiarities, and absurdities, and extravagances, which cause Manchester people to be proverbed elsewhere, and often afford no small amusement at home, are but as spots on the face of the sun compared with the integrity and radiating benevolence of Manchester character generally; or they are as the "foam on the crest of the billow," whose very excess of spume and froth indicates the depth and the power of the waters beneath. Manchester wealth and consequence have sprung quickly as mushrooms from the soil; but with them, step by

step, have risen and flourished institutions for the promotion of knowledge, of art, of science, and above all, for the exercise of humanity, which have never found their superiors, seldom their parallels.

As a whole, Manchester stands high for her intelligent and benevolent community; but no one can be conversant with society in the manufacturing districts without being aware, that while a great and characteristic resemblance may be traced through the whole, there are yet such varying circumstances appertaining to it as almost to divide it into distinct and separate classes. Though by the self-same steps, and in the same—to speak technically—"line of business," all have risen from a low rank in life to one of wealth and power, and influence; yet light and darkness are scarcely more dissimilar than is the low-lived and ignorant, though shrewd, mill-owner of some out-lying district, from the cultivated denizen of the town; and the disgust with which the vulgar pleasures and brutal excesses of the former are regarded by the latter, are only equalled by the pitying contempt

with which the magnate of the country looks upon the more refined gratifications of his compeer of the town. Between these extremes there is a third class, a connecting medium, partaking in some degree both of the vices of the one and the refinements of the other, formed, as may be expected, from circumstances which draw it within the influences of both without entailing exclusive connexion with either.

It would be absurd to suppose that men of mediocre birth, whose whole energies are devoted to the active pursuits of trade, can have acquired the grace of manner and refinement of taste which characterize those of higher rank, whose chief occupation is to adorn their leisure. But as a whole—notwithstanding the peculiarities and vulgarities which are become proverbial—as a whole, the inhabitants of Manchester rank high for intelligence and benevolence; and the *native* population of the county, through all its grades, will bear comparison with any in the empire for vigour of intellect and—where peremptory engagements have allowed—for acquired knowledge.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANOTHER COTTON-MAN AND HIS GUESTS.

"Amang a' the wondrous improvements e'er made,
What do you now think o' the spinnin' o't,
That fountain and prop o' our flourishing trade,
How changed since the weary beginnin' o't.
Wi' the rock and the spindle our grannies began,
Neist at their wee wheelies they spat and they span,
O little they thought o' the beautiful plan
That now is spread wide for the spinnin' o't."

Scotch Song.

"On these we look
As abstracts drawn from Nature's larger book."

CRABBE.

THE day came when Mr. Ainsley fulfilled the engagement, which at her request he had long before entered into, and conducted Mrs. Frances Halling through his mill. A peremptory summons obliged him to leave her

somewhat abruptly, but she minded this the less as she was previously engaged to his house to dine that evening, where she and her nephew duly arrived.

The hypercritic might say there was a little too much ornament in the drawing-room, a little too much decoration on the ladies; but the embellishments of the room were in good taste and well contrasted: the dress of the ladies was more rich than fine.

Amongst others whom we may *now* venture to record was a venerable-looking lady, dressed in black silk, with a profusion of clear snowy muslin over her throat and neck; her silver hair was rolled in antique style over her forehead, and was surmounted by a spotless mob cap. Her sister, a very tall thin lady, was somewhat more modern in her toilet, and appeared in all the bravery of a turban, and matronly-looking grey silk gown, wearing, also, a gold chain, and two or three antique mourning-rings. The manners of these ladies were not marked by any peculiar polish; nor did their conversation in-

dicate any peculiar accomplishment; but they received from all present a degree of welcome, or rather a *sort* of welcome, which their immense property alone could not have induced even in Manchester. The cause was indexed in countenances whose every line told of a long and virtuous life spent in rational pursuits, and the practice of active benevolence.

Near them was a gentleman who, though totally unconnected with them, might well be included in the same description. He was advanced in life, heavy in appearance, and somewhat infirm; but his countenance beamed with benevolence, and his manners were marked *on all occasions* by the most polished and gentlemanly suavity—a characteristic which he has bequeathed to his descendants. And in the downhill of life also, but still with a ruddy cheek and stalwart frame, was the "Beau Brummell" of Manchester—the last male representative of an old and honoured family.

In a retired corner, shrinking as it were from notice, sat a thin, pale, old man, in a quaker's garb, with thin grey hair, (which

ever and anon he stroked down with his hand,) and a countenance in which intelligence, benevolence, and simplicity seemed to struggle for mastery. He hardly looked in his element; and, as he disappeared immediately after dinner, we rather suppose he had yielded to the entreaties of the hospitable master of the mansion in venturing for a short time into a scene for which his usual habits and pursuits gave him a distaste. A beautiful child of three years old, a young visitor at the house, had fearlessly established herself on his knee, and his regards were divided between her and a pale sickly gentleman, thin and rather small, with prominent bright eyes, and most intelligent countenance, who was conversing with great energy on some matter of science. There were other ladies—in the course of the evening several — and gentlemen, who still adorn the town in and by whose commerce they have risen.

The dinner passed off as quietly and easily as dinners in a well-regulated establishment, and amongst people who do not live to eat,

but eat to live, usually do. Good society is the same everywhere; it may, and of course does, vary in minor circumstances, but in a private social meeting of well-bred people there is little on which to expatiate. The same may be said of the conversation generally of such *réunions;* but this evening it imperceptibly and not unnaturally had a peculiar reference to the occupation which had beguiled the morning of the host and several of his guests, who had politely accompanied Mrs. Halling through the, to her, strange scene.

Mr. Ashworth, though too well-informed to credit all the horrors which were circulating *

* This sketch was written some three years ago, when a periodical work was in circulation which defeated its own benevolent and honourable ends by the exaggerations of its statements. These exaggerated horrors were drawn, it is said, from a very scarce pamphlet, (of which I possess a copy,) called "A Memoir of Robert Blincoe," which was suppressed almost immediately on its publication.

Into the mouth of my cotton-merchant in the text I have put sentiments and opinions, not such as might appertain to the hero of a novel, but such as I believe a great portion of his class to possess.

respecting "the filth, the misery, the famine, and the vice" generated in the cotton-mills, did yet frankly confess himself agreeably surprised by the very opposite character they exhibited.

"But I do suppose," said he, "that we have perhaps been through a pattern or show-mill."

"By no means; I could take you through many mills in Manchester which, though varying in size, are conducted exactly on the same principles; and the mills in the country districts are, from many favouring circumstances, superior in their arrangements to these."

"Is there not extreme cruelty practised in some of them?" said Mrs. Halling.

"On my conscience, no; I believe—no."

"Whence, then, has the widely-circulated belief in it originated?"

"It originated in a state of things which now no longer exists. For instance, crippled or deformed limbs are considered by many to be the necessary concomitants of factory-

labour. It is true that the old spinning-frame very frequently induced deformity, because it entailed on the operative the necessity of perpetual stooping, almost to the ground. But for many years the use of that machine has been entirely superseded by one which is worked in an upright and natural attitude, and does not necessarily induce deformity; that evil is therefore done away."

"But severe and fatal accidents do frequently occur."

"There is no trade or business in life that is not liable to its own peculiar risks and accidents. It has been proved from statistical facts, that fatal accidents are not one twentieth part so common in cotton-factories as in coal-mines.* I have no reason to suppose that I have been peculiarly or singularly fortunate in my experience; I employ 1,100 hands in

* I have before remarked that this chapter (then intended merely as part of a slighter sketch) was written some time ago, and consequently before those fearful and disgusting discoveries of the nature of coal-mine labour which have recently been elicited in Parliament, to the horror and disgust of every thinking person.

one mill, and amongst these only one fatal accident has occurred in fifteen years, and that was occasioned by carelessness so extreme, as to be almost unaccountable."

"But, still the people are overworked."

"No; the hours of labour *were* formerly extreme, and, in consequence, cruel in their results; this is not the case now, and surely, surely, it is not too much to require that we be judged by what we *are*, and not be blindly condemned by statements, many of them exaggerated, of what others *have been*."

"But the children," said Mrs. Halling; "you must allow that the very fact of their being worked ten hours in the day is sufficiently lamentable."

"It is so; and to look at it theoretically every man with a humane heart would wish that children should be free and unfettered, and pass their early years in gaiety and liberty. But this is impossible. The children of the poor *must* work; and that being the case, the true philanthropist will bend his energies rather towards the amelioration of existing evils,

than to the invention of a Utopian and unattainable system of freedom and happiness. From their very earliest years the children of the poor *everywhere* are accustomed to labour towards their own subsistence. Parliament has enacted that children under thirteen shall not be employed in factories, and consequently parents send their children to other trades,—frequently those in which labour is harder and worse paid,—until they are of an age to be admitted into factories, and very, very frequently the parents themselves overstate the ages of their children in order to obtain their admission into factories."

"Can any labour be harder than factory-labour?"

"My dear Mrs. Halling, you, who have reposed in ease and independence from your birth, can form no idea of the comparative degrees of labour and toil. You can hardly judge of the energies of the youthful mind, and its aptitude in conforming itself to those circumstances of toil and of hardship which the great proportion of human beings are

formed to endure. I, on the contrary, who was born in almost the lowest rank in life, I cannot refer to the period of childhood without calling to mind numerous instances, which occurred around me, of youthful, I may almost say of infantile, privation and endurance, to which the merely bodily labour of the youthful factory-artisan, continuous though it be, appears not only endurable but easy. Domestic operatives, hand-loom weavers, lace-manufacturers, stocking or framework-knitters, work from twelve to sixteen hours a day,—never under fourteen,—to earn the very barest subsistence; and this in close, damp, unwholesome cottages, to which the worst-constructed factory, as they now exist, is a very retreat of health. A hundred and fifty thousand females are employed in lace-running—a domestic employment; they begin this work at nine or ten years of age, working early and late in a constantly stooping position, injuring their eyesight, their growth, and frequently inducing consumption. I need not remind you of the proverbial endurance of the milliners and

straw-bonnet workers; they are usually apprenticed at the very age when, if ever, the youthful female requires relaxation and relief; their hours of work are said to be twelve, but for three parts of their time these young females are kept fourteen, sixteen, seventeen hours closely sewing, and they are not infrequently detained all night. For this spirit-breaking, health-consuming toil, the apprentice receives nothing, literally nothing but on the contrary frequently pays a high premium. But the business is *genteel*, and is therefore preferred to that of a factory operative; though the latter at the same age will not only be supporting herself comfortably, but if prudent, will be laying something by."

"But these factory children certainly look pale."

"They do: but take a hundred, fifty, twenty factory children, and compare them with the same number of Manchester children taken from any trade out of the factories, and if the difference be not rather in favour of the former than otherwise I will relinquish the

argument at once. But the truth is that a number of children, factory and non-factory, have been literally weighed and measured, and the difference was scarcely perceptible."

"Your arguments are powerful," said Mr. Ashworth; "but the truth is,—as doubtless you will have guessed from my good aunt's earnest catechising,—that our minds have been somewhat prejudiced against the factory system."

"My good sir," returned Mr. Ainsley, "it is easy for you to satisfy yourself of the truth of what I have advanced. Visit the different mills; examine the operatives for yourself; judge for yourself, weigh, measure, scrutinize. It is moreover plainly the master's *interest* to keep his workpeople in health and good-humour. But I will not dwell on this view of the subject. The Lancashire cotton-men may be humbly born, and it may be that their habits and manners as a body are obnoxious to criticism and to ridicule; they may be eager after money; they may be given to luxury; but they are men of like hearts, souls, and

feelings with others more favourably placed in life; they are responsible beings, and in general they feel their responsibility. Every body of men will have some "untoward" spirits among them, and I do not deny that there may be some such amongst the Cottonocracy: but I do aver that a system which is fostered by such men as the Grants, the Birleys, and others like them, both in town and country,—I do say that this system cannot be one which would encourage its upholders, —were they so disposed—"daily to send (as it has been lately said) millions of groans to be registered in heaven from joyless young hearts and aching infant limbs."

"I shall begin to think that you consider the factory-system very perfection itself."

"Then will your conclusion outrun my argument. That a great, a most beneficial and enlightening change has taken place in the factory-system since the time when its degrading and destructive influence gave rise to the evils which have been so loudly proclaimed—is true. That the morals and the habits of

the operatives are improving, and that their comforts are better attended to than formerly, I believe. The education of the children is also gradually and systematically progressing; though that has seldom been below the standard of non-factory operatives, as the tables of the various Sunday-schools will show. But in my opinion, an inestimable advantage attending the day-schools now attached to many of the mills is, that young girls are taught the use of the needle; for one great cause of the misery and squalidness hitherto so prevalent in the cottages of the factory-people, has been the utter inability of women brought up almost from their cradles in factories, to make or even to repair their own apparel and that of their families. This evil is disappearing; and though I do not call the factory system 'perfection'—though sometimes even the thought crosses my mind, that manufacturing interests are assuming a too great preponderance in the affairs of the country,*

* Perhaps this opinion can scarcely be attributed to the Cotton lords generally.

still I do hope and believe that 'our system,' if fairly examined, will stand the test."

The conversation now reverted to general topics.

Mr. Ashworth was, as usual, one of the most chatty and entertaining of the party. He remarked how full of metaphors the English language is, and that persons who have not the most remote idea of what a metaphor means, are perpetually using them.

"If a man," says he, "is successful in any undertaking, you say he '*carries the day*:' he does no such thing; how *can* he carry the day? — he *carries* nothing. Again; he '*came off with flying colours*,'—why, nothing of the kind; he had no colours."

"No," said Mr. Ainsley; "but I imagine the metaphor may be easily explained. It originated, I believe, in the old custom of decking a successful candidate in variously-coloured ribbons, which were frequently fastened round his hat and so went flying in the wind."

Some one asked Mr. Walmsley, the nephew

of the host, whether he had subscribed the petition which was circulating on some political matter.

"No, I have not."

"Why not?"

"Because it went against my conscience."

"There!—there again!" joyously exclaimed Mr. Ashworth; "it went against his conscience, *it* went against his conscience — what? — a steam-carriage? — something goes full tilt against something — and he says *it* went against his *conscience.* There 's metaphor, for you!"

All laughed at this sally, and having thus slaughtered a gentleman, Mr. Ashworth addressed himself "in courteous wise," to a young lady; but received rather a provoking retort to one of his most amiable witticisms. He appealed in revenge to his host, asking if he countenanced "blue stockings" at his table.

"Certainly!" replied Mr. Ainsley, "when, as in the case of this lady, they are concealed by a robe of taste and elegance."

The lusty Lothario, rejected by the young, directed his attention to the elderly ladies, but with still worse success; for, when one, in her turn appealed to Mr. Ainsley, that gentleman said something so courteously about the satisfaction there was "in seeing the experience and propriety of age combined with some of the most engaging qualities of youth," that the palm for saying "the prettiest things" was yielded to him by acclamation; above which, however, the jocund "haw! haw!" of the discomfited hero was distinctly audible.

Mr. Ashworth then addressed the ladies generally, entreating that "some one would for charity's sweet sake instruct him in the art of saying pretty things;" but, seemingly, the immensity of the undertaking alarmed them, for they almost instantly retired.

Cards were introduced in the evening, but no one seemed disposed to play; and Mr. Ainsley conducted Mrs. Halling into an apartment purposely erected for, and admirably suited to its destination as, a music-room. In Manchester it is not easy to get into an *un-*

musical circle; the science is not only generally loved, but is really studied to an extent not common elsewhere. Some of the circle here were peculiarly accomplished, and the evening passed rapidly away.

As Mrs. Halling's carriage rolled homeward with its occupants, its course lay through a long, quiet street, which at that hour was as still and dark as if all its inhabitants were buried in repose. Not, however, exclusively so. In one apartment of a house, which was somewhat different in its form from the adjoining ones, a light gleamed through the crevices of the shutters.

Could Mr. Ashworth or Mrs. Halling have entered the room at that moment, probably their first impulse would have been to smile at the heterogeneous assortment of articles it contained. In the centre was a table covered with a baize that perhaps had once been green, and a deal form on one side, and a slate or two, with a few dogs'-eared books at one corner, gave token that this was the place appropriated to urchins who came thither for

initiation into the mysteries of science. A table in a recess, supported a small pair of globes, and a few books; other books, in most unattractive bindings, were arranged—or as far as outward appearance went, we should say, disarranged — on shelves on one side of the fire-place, the lower space being occupied by a coal-scuttle, a brush, a duster, &c. &c.; and on one of the corresponding shelves of the other side, were placed some phials (which might have passed in appearance for the *débris* collected after some bankrupt druggist's sale of effects), and a collection of glasses, cups, and retorts, which might puzzle any philosopher in the world to tell the use of. The mantel-shelf was occupied with nondescript articles; and in front of the fire, with the light gleaming strongly on his face, sat the grey-haired gentleman we have before alluded to. His countenance beaming with animation, he sat totally unconscious, apparently, of the flight of time, of the lateness of the hour, or of anything but a chemical preparation, the

progress of which, over a small spirit-lamp, he was intently watching.

Perhaps the result of this solitary vigil, was a discovery which, in its consequences, might affect the welfare of a world.

Is there any reason that we should not write the name of our ancient instructor and revered friend—Dr. Dalton ?

CHAPTER XIV.

A WOOER.

"Her hopes have no abode."

It was about noontime one warm and sunny day, that a peculiar-looking vehicle was slowly proceeding up the cross road between —— and ——. It was a gig, calculated only for one, and not very much higher from the ground than a child's carriage. To this a Liliputian pony was harnessed, and seemed to draw it along cheerily. In it was seated an old man of very peculiar dress and appearance; he had a broad leathern belt round his waist and a sword by his side. On his head he wore a black velvet hat, surmounted by a plume of feathers. He was pale and ema-

ciated in appearance; and there was a restlessness in his light eye, an uncertain, unsettled flashing, which spoke of disordered intellect, even if his strange equipment had not told the fact. A gentleman was advancing rapidly in a gig in an opposite direction, and he drew up his horse as he approached the hermit.

"I say, old 'un, which is the way to Lime Grove?"

Self-respect, to a certain degree, is one of the most ennobling attributes of our nature; indeed, a being totally divested of it will sink below, not rise above, the common herd. In foolish people and in idiots it degenerates into vanity, and is contemptible or ridiculous; but it is often found in its loftiest aspect in people who, from extraneous causes, we should consider little likely to possess it. We have represented our hermit as meek and humble-minded, and so he was; yet, combined with his natural humility, and with his impaired intellect, was an independent principle within, a just self-estimation, which would have led

him fearlessly to repel insult, though offered by a prince. The contemptuous tone of this interrogation roused up every latent spark of pride.

"Did you speak to me, sir?"

"Why, who the devil should I be speaking to, but you, ye old dotard? There 's not another fool in sight."

"That may, or may not be," said the hermit, whistling his pony to proceed.

Mr. John Balshawe—for it was he—made a snatch at the reins by which the carriage was driven, which he contrived to get hold of and retain.

"Now, ye d— dullard, tell me the way to Lime Grove, or, by Heaven! I 'll drag your fool's carcase along with me, and make a show of you to Miss Langshawe."

"Miss Langshawe!" said the old man, tamed at once. "What have you to do with her?"

"Oh, ho! and what 's that to you, my fine fellow? Suppose I 'm going a-courting, will you come and be a thriving wooer, too, eh? I shall be quite afraid of you."

"That road will lead you direct to Lime Grove, Mr. John, for I remember you now," and the hermit endeavoured to re-possess himself of the reins.

"But Mr. John Balshawe was far too facetious and high-spirited a gentleman to let this be effected without "a bit of a spree." So before the old man with feeble and trembling hands had arranged them, he gave the pony some desperate switches with his gig-whip, which sent it madly off, and the frail carriage, jerking against a heap of stones in the road, was broken and very nearly upset. After whooping with laughter at this estimable specimen of his wit, he proceeded on the road which the hermit had pointed out.

The latter, having obtained the assistance of some less witty and less spirited persons to repair his crazy vehicle, wended slowly homeward. The careless words of the young man respecting Miss Langshawe, (which almost any one else would have regarded as mere impudent flash,) dwelt on his mind, and in the end he formed the idea, which he clung

to with the pertinacity of a weak mind, that a marriage was in prospect. He well knew Mr. Langshawe's fondness for money, and he knew by report of the great wealth of Mr. Balshawe, sen., and his dreaming mind soon drew out a little romance, not so far from the truth, except that he substituted compulsion for what was meant to be effected by persuasion.

He had known Miss Langshawe from her infancy; when she was a child he was in the habit of propitiating her by little presents of flowers, or baskets and other playthings twined of rushes, which he made with great ingenuity; and she, who knew not what it was to forget a kindness, however trivial, she on her occasional visits from school, had always begged to be taken to see him: and since her permanent return home had visited him perpetually, and had taken every opportunity of evincing kindness towards him. No wonder that such winning conduct should make deep impression on a mind which, naturally affectionate, and limited by peculiar circumstances

in the sphere of its regards, vented its affection with more intensity on the few who came within its contracted orbit. There was no sacrifice of personal comfort which he would not have made to secure even a passing pleasure to Miss Langshawe; is it surprising, then, that a circumstance like the one which he was now considering should engross every energy of his being? He knew well that young Balshawe was not worthy of Miss Langshawe, and he considered, therefore, that if a marriage was in agitation—and he had worked himself up to a full belief on this point—either the young lady was unacquainted with the true character of her lover, or, if acquainted with it, that undue influence was exercised over her. In either case, he considered himself bound to interfere in her behalf, and in the silence of his solitary abode he set himself to cogitate on the best manner of prosecuting what he conceived to be his duty.

Meanwhile Mr. Balshawe, junior, had found his way to Lime Grove, where his reception from the owner of the mansion and his lady

was all that heart could wish. When introduced to Edith, she welcomed him with the lady-like cordiality which she always extended towards her father's guests, but which was secretly interpreted by the young man into something more personally flattering. Under the influence of this feeling, his attentions before the evening closed, had assumed an earnestness and particularity which her father saw would quickly frighten his shy bird from the lure, and he therefore lost no time in telling Mr. Balshawe, that though he should feel proud and happy when the day came that should complete the contract on which he had set his heart, still he had not yet even intimated his wishes to his daughter.

"Edith," he added, "has not been well of late, and her mother and I thought that the subject might perhaps agitate her."

He could not conceal from himself that Edith was paler and thinner; but as she continued cheerful and talkative, he resolutely shut his eyes to the fact, that her voice had lost much of its joyousness, her conversation much of its animated gaiety.

Mr. Balshawe promised to attend to the hint thus given him; the visit passed off exceedingly well, and he was pressed by Mr. and Mrs. Langshawe to return at the races which were fast approaching. This invitation did not seem anything extraordinary to Edith, as the race-time is one of universal bustle and gaiety; and it is considered a point of hospitable pride to fill your house somewhat "fuller than it will hold."

A few days before this notably-stirring time, Edith was told that William Bladow wished to speak with her. She went to him immediately, and was lured by him into the garden, under some pretence about a plant; when there, however, he seemed lost in thought, and paid no attention to the flower which she supposed he had come expressly to see. Accustomed to his odd ways, she kindly humoured him, and walked on silently and slowly. At last he abruptly exclaimed, as if thinking aloud,

"Oh! Miss Edith, he isn't worthy of you!"

"What do you mean?" said Edith.

"Indeed, my dear young lady, it grieves me to say a word that may hurt you; but indeed, indeed, I know it to be true, or I would not speak it. He's a bad man, and you cannot be happy."

"Who? what do you mean? I don't know what you allude to."

"Why, this wedding — Mr. John Balshawe."

"Wedding! Mr. Balshawe!" repeated the amazed Edith: "there is no wedding, nor likely to be."

"Isn't there? Thank God for that, then! But the whole country-side is ringing with it, and I feared it was but too true. Be praised it isn't."

"What put such folly into your head, Bladow?"

"Nay, Miss Langshawe, folly or not, himself told me."

"He told you—what?"

"That he was coming a-courting to you; and sorry and vex'd was I to hear it; and then

I thought may be, most like—you wouldn't have him; but when he stayed here day after day—and the neighbourhood was full of it—and folk said that anyhow the old people had made it up—and no doubt they 'd persuade the young lady into it—then I made up my mind to speak to ye; but I didn't know how to manage it for fear of giving offence, which I 'd loth do to you. And, now, if I've vexed you, ye must forgive me; for ye're as dear to me as my own child."

The kind old man might have gone on for some time longer, ere Edith found voice to stop him. However she rallied, and telling him that far from being offended, she was obliged to him; that there was not the slightest foundation for the report, and that she begged he would contradict it wherever he heard it,—a commission that made him completely happy,—she hurried from him to her own chamber. There she collected her scattered thoughts, and she remembered twenty trivial circumstances, unheeded at the time, which struck her now forcibly, as confirming the

vague hints of the hermit, of a marriage with their late visitor being projected by her father. Above all, Mr. Langshawe's unjustifiable conduct to Frank Walmsley; for whatever might be his right, his manner of exercising it was unjustifiable—this conduct, which at the time struck her with astonishment and dismay, seemed to her now fully accounted for by the clue she had obtained to his motives.

"And was it for this," she said—"for a mercenary bargain with the son of a vulgar, profligate man—himself I fancy by no means immaculate—was it for this that such a man as Mr. Walmsley was to be treated with scorn and contumely?"

And she shed bitter tears of anger and mortification.

But ere long calmer thoughts and a better spirit resumed their accustomed sway. She remembered the unvarying, the undeviating, and unbounded kindness with which her father had ever treated her; and though she knew his prejudices were strong on some points, she

had always felt assured in her own mind, that his affection for her would ultimately triumph over them. Nor would she suffer herself to doubt it, even now. Then as she became cooler, she reflected on the very uncertain source from which her information was derived; she knew the weakness of the hermit's mind, and how during his long hours of seclusion he brooded on ideas till they became realities. Then, again, she knew that he was truth itself; and he had said that this wedding, projected by the two fathers, was the talk of the neighbourhood. She also recalled many instances of more than hospitable — of peculiar and striking attentions which her father had paid to the young man; and again her heart misgave her.

She resolved, however, to know the truth, and at first she thought of applying to her mother; but this, on second thoughts, she felt it better not to do. Edith dearly loved her mother, and for any participation in her joy, or kind sympathy in her sorrow, she would have flown at once to her arms.

But as well as knowing that to her father's will, whatever it might be, her mother had ever shown the most devoted and unenquiring obedience, she had also been accustomed to feel that the judgment that should guide, the wisdom that should direct, the firmness that should resolve, in cases of doubt or difficulty, had hardly been accorded to her mother. And though shrinking in spirit from the task, she yet, with the firmness of mind which characterised all her deliberate actions, sought her father.

Mr. Langshawe found that his daughter had received some intimation of his projects, and he at once declared that he had indulged the idea of her union, at some time, with the son of his old friend, supposing it more than probable, from what he had seen of the young man, that he might in time render himself agreeable to her; but he totally and entirely disclaimed on his own part, any idea of exercising undue authority over her. He added, that as the young gentleman was returning in a few days, Edith would please him much by endeavouring to look at him favourably.

"My father, my dear, dear father, I promised you that I would give no encouragement to Mr. Walmsley, and I will faithfully, religiously, keep my promise; but more you must not require of me."

"I do not *require* anything of you: I merely ask that you will receive this young gentleman as my particular friend."

"But will he not, sir, infer something further in such a reception from me?"

"Perhaps he may; but what of that—it does not tie you."

"Yes, indeed, sir, it would, virtually."

A hasty reply was on the father's lip, but he checked himself, and merely said,

"Mr. John Balshawe will be here next week; the house will be full of company, which will take away any appearance of particularity in his visit; and it can be no great trial to you to receive from him those attentions which every other man in the house will be sure to pay you."

He left the room, and his daughter durst not then press the subject any further.

CHAPTER XV.

MANCHESTER IN THE RACE WEEK.

"Of our amusements ask you?"

CRABBE.

"The scholar forgets his learning,
The poet his fancied woes."

THERE is one short season of the year when the female world in and about the "metropolis of the North" is shorn of its outward lustre, and the horizon of dress and fashion is dimmed by a transient cloud.

Ladies, usually the "glass of fashion," appear in a last summer's vamped-up bonnet, (for winter habiliments are no longer endurable,) and "bright stars in the galaxy" of dress and show are content to confer grace and dignity on a humble plaited straw. Are the *modistes* asleep?—Oh! by no means. The

very newspapers abridge the reported eloquence of the senate, the glories of the Conservative Dinner, or the details of the "Radical Demonstration"—the patriotic effusions of O'Connell, or the marvellous meanderings of his "Tail," in order to announce in imposing type a lengthened array of such "at homes" as the following:—

"Miss Hamilton has the honour to announce her return from London, with an *elegant* assortment of *Millinery*, which she trusts the ladies of Manchester will do her the favour of inspecting on Tuesday next."

"39, Princes St."

"Mesdames Shaw & Co. 23, St. Anne's Square, respectfully announce their intention of showing the London and *Parisian Summer Fashions* on Thursday next and ensuing days."

"Shaw and Baldwin beg most respectfully to inform the ladies of Manchester, Salford, and their vicinities, that Miss Shaw is *just* returned from London with millinery, dresses, tuscan and straw bonnets, together with a

choice assortment of RIBBONS, FRENCH FLOWERS, &c., &c., which will be ready for inspection on Tuesday next."

"4, St. Anne's Place."

"MRS. WAREING begs to inform the ladies of Manchester and its vicinity, that *she is now in* London selecting summer fashions, which she will have the pleasure of showing in a few days."

"MISS M'GHIE begs to inform the ladies of Manchester and its vicinity, that she *is* returned from London, where she has selected from the first houses at *the West end* a fashionable variety of MILLINERY, PELISSES, DRESSES, &c., *figured*, *plain*, and *watered silk*, *French ribbons*, and *flowers*. The whole will be ready for inspection on Tuesday next and following days."

"MRS. MURRY, grateful to the ladies of Manchester and its neighbourhood for the favours she has received, respectfully begs to inform them she is now in London, *selecting* with care and attention *every* article for the present and ensuing season, and which will

be open for inspection on Tuesday the 10th of May, soliciting a continuance of their future favours."

"63, King-street."

Etcetera, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

No, the *modistes* are not in fault; notwithstanding the fatigues of their late journeys, they are to be seen with dim eyes, pale faces, and aching brows, stitch, stitch, stitching, sew, sew, sewing, from early morning to past midnight, while the graceful draperies and gossamer bonnets multiply under their busy fingers. Nay, we have heard it intimated that these assiduous devotees at the shrine of taste multiply themselves as well as their dresses; and that during their periodical absences in London and Paris, assimilating, assorting, and catering with all the energies of a spirit devoted to tulle, and blonde, and *peau de soie*, they are *bodily* imprisoned in their own back parlour, stitching, and shaping, and sewing, much to the edification and comfort of their juvenile assistants. Who will say that the

occupation of a *modiste* is not an intellectual one, since it thus tends to the severing of body and spirit?

Neither are the gentlemen of the shears less occupied, and trowsers or pantaloons, "those indispensable appendages to gentlemen," (*vide* "John Bull,") in every variety of long or short, of wide or tight, or slack or "slack-tights," as the case may be, "white, black, or grey," like the old witches, as the fashion may be, are heaped a mighty mass, an undistinguishable throng, amidst silken waistcoats the very acme of taste, and broadcloth coats the very "mould of form." The quotation is not misapplied; the form is fully as often in the coat as in the wearer, and an accomplished habit-maker—there are no tailors now!—knows his duty much better than to leave Nature to herself. "Nature unadorned!" —pshaw!—the poet in all his dreams never chanced to have a prophetic vision of the glories of the golden Cottonocracy. "If nature is to be modeled," says L. E. L. "let it be by refinement, grace, and education."

Ah! L. E. L. never had the advantage of a sojourn in the metropolis of the North or its environs, or she would have known that there are other ways of modeling nature.

But why is all this preparation afloat? why do the ladies delay to appropriate the satin and blonde which courts their notice in every hue that nature herself can invent, in every attractive form that fancy can devise? and why do not the gentlemen hasten to display the glories of the last new cut? Is there an annual coronation of a cotton king for which all these preparations are being made? No, not so; but there *is* a festival at hand at which the pink and the primrose must appear in their first blush and beauty, and before which the delicate lilac and the zephyr crape, that grow pale beneath a summer's breath, or shrink beneath the touch of rain, must not yield up their "sweet lives." Fashions may be renewed monthly, and wardrobes may be renewed with them; but the peculiar fashions that harbinger the summer, the parents of the frail and fragile family of beautiful trifles

which have been unheard of amid the furs and stuffs of winter, but now come forth radiant as butterflies from their shrouds, and which are from their novelty more beautiful than any of their progeny of succeeding months; these must still repose within the sheltering folds of paper—white—brown—cap—whitey-brown—or tissue.

Next week are THE RACES!

The "great festival of the North," which has not its parallel in England,—the Manchester races, come next week.

Miserable Manchester in the race-week!

Nay, even the indefatigable and almost exhausted *modiste*,

> "By that best of all ways
> To lengthen the days,
> To steal a few hours from the night;"

even she, by this ingenious but harassing expedient, has despatched her last promised dress, and flown on the wings of the time to the races!

The habit-maker, having by inexpressible exertions completed the inexpressible number

of inexpressibles which were ordered in an inexpressibly short time, is to his own inexpressible satisfaction sporting a pair of his own inexpressibly-beautiful inexpressibles at Kersal Moor.

The climbing-boy keeps holiday, the itinerant match-seller goes with him ; the lame beggar has found his feet, the blind one his eyes. Ladies are gone in their carriages, gentlemen are gone in their gigs, and *people* have taken every coach, cart, gig, horse, shandry, barrow, donkey, and dog in the town. The banker closes his house, the tradesman shuts his warehouse, the shopkeeper deserts his counter, the usurer leaves his desk, for none come to chaffer, nay, the attorney lays aside his books, for none have time to quarrel.

The clock of St. Anne's church sullenly tolls the hour, and startles the square with its echoes. Most of the shops, even in that mart of noonday bustle, are closed ; here and there is one open, and its single occupant—like Goldsmith's traveller, "weary, pensive, solitary, slow,"—regards you with a look of

wistful surprise, as if he had not thought of the possibility of anyone being absent from the races but his unlucky self. Nay, even Mr. Satterfield's favourite and fashionable place of resort is no exception; and the *locum tenens* of that ever-liberal, and obliging, and gentlemanly caterer does absolutely yawn and drop his scissors in cutting off your yards of ribbon. He could not help it, nor could we —for sympathy.

The languid sparrows hop across the deserted square, and seem too much out of spirits even to chirp; while the afternoon sun pours his intense glare from end to end and from side to side, not a single object intervening to cast even a passing shadow. You pass on; the post-office is closed, and you almost feel inclined to doubt whether it will be opened when the mails come in, or whether the mails do come in on a race-day. The elegant semi-circular exchange is as quiet as its own shadow; no busy crowds throng the area in front, no eager murmuring of voices is heard to issue from its portal; you peep in at the windows,

you do not see even a solitary "elderly respectable gentleman" poring over a newspaper. No, it is the races! You just bethink you that Bulwer's new novel, which you have been promised so long, will be in now, and you step round the walls to the library. The door is shut—that *is* a disappointment; for though you care not a pin about the races, you feel the general dulness wrap you round as a shroud. It cannot be helped; you turn from the door.

On your right hand Market Street, on the left St. Mary's Gate and its continuation stretch their long arms, and the Market Place lies before you; all is dull, and still, and silent. The littered ground strewed with the *débris* of fruit and vegetables bears evidence to a yesterday's market; but the hucksters are gone: there is not even an orange barrow. The fish market seems open, but what of that? the fish is half cooked by the heat while the scanty attendants have fallen asleep; they don't fear thieves here on a race day. You hear sounds at a little distance, you approach

them, and you find "a gentleman of the counter" has to his own infinite delight, and that of a young lady (by courtesy) who is with him, succeeded in routing from the recesses of a third-rate livery-stable a crazy gig and a broken-winded wall-eyed horse, which even in the overwhelming request for any and everything in the shape of a horse and carriage had hitherto been passed by.

"I say this beast won't kick, will it?"

"As quiet as a lamb, sir, if you knows how to manage him; and don't overdrive him; and be careful over the rough bits, sir; the springs is rather loose."

And with this caution as a *salvo* to his conscience the ostler pocketed two guineas, and touched his hat.

"Set the beast off, will you? he 's sulky."

The man gives the animal a scutch which sends him off at speed, — amidst the shrieking laughter of the lady, and the encouraging whistles of the gentleman uttered with all the vociferation of shop-boy Jehuism,— to the races!

You walk up Market Street, the windows are all closed: you meet occasionally a passenger: he eyes you with somewhat of a suspicious look, you return it,—"I wonder," you say to yourself, "why he is not at the races."

You come to the Royal Hotel, and walk past the Albion, up Piccadilly; all looks hot and quiet, and in Portland Place the very houses themselves are asleep. You return, the Infirmary Gardens look as dull and as dusty as usual; the Infirmary Pond as dark and unsightly as ever. You almost wish that it had been made into a "ship canal," as was somewhile talked of, in order that you might see a sign of life about it. You look up at the Infirmary; it is a blessed charity, which stays not for time or season on its healing course, but—pshaw! moralizing at the races!

You pass along Mosley Street; the lofty and spacious houses give little token of habitation: the Portico steps are unoccupied, and no hope of its library being open; the Assembly Room door is shut; the new Club House seems to be empty; the Royal Institution looks

more dungeon-like than ordinary. You pass St. Peter's church ; the Oxford Road bears none of the usual tides of human life on its broad surface ; the groaning factories are still ; the tall chimneys send forth no smoke ; the usual din is hushed. The reason ? The Millocrat and his thousands are at the races. The Concert Hall is passed, and you look to the Hall of Natural History,—it is but a few paces ; it is worth the trial. Open by all that's wonderful ! (A lady is allowed to swear if she do but mince and mouth it prettily.)

" Why Mrs. Reynolds, is that you yourself or your ghost ? Why are you not at the races ? "

" My husband is gone, ma'am, and we can't both leave here."

Happy hearing thought we : and we soon forgot the races, our own blue devils, and what was a greater forget than either, " Zanoni ! "

We knew a youth, a boy, who was treasuring his money for the next races. His parents were not wealthy ; his weekly allowance was but trifling. With a unity of purpose worthy a better cause, he debarred himself the indul-

gences which his pocket-money usually supplied, and for many months he laid up every penny. The races came. He would not attend them on Wednesday, because Thursday is usually a better day. Thursday he went, and he returned quietly home in the evening without a penny in his pockets, rather to the discomfiture of his parents who had no idea of his executing his plan so literally. He had spent all his savings, and if they had amounted to as much again he would have spent them. It was his hobby; he had ridden it and was satisfied; nor did he ever give the slightest intimation in any way that could lead one to suppose he thought "he had given too much for his whistle."

Manchester people are brought up to go to the races as regularly though not so frequently as to church. Their return seems to be considered as infallible and as important in summer, as that of Christmas in winter. And the preparation of green gooseberry raised tarts for one, as important a piece of housewifery as that of mince pies for the other. Raised veal

pies, gooseberry ditto, cold ham, cold tongue, cold beef, cold fowls, &c. &c , are as inseparably united in the mind of a child with one season of the year, as mince-pie, plum-pudding, snap-dragon and twelfth-cake are with another. We do not by any means wish to insinuate that gooseberry pies and cold beef are not to be met with in Manchester at other seasons of the year ; but certainly this is the only season when for three days together every dining table is stretched to its full dimensions, and by eleven o'clock in a morning, people who are ceremonious enough on most occasions, pour in *sans ceremonie* for the professed purpose of eating and drinking.

Gooseberry tarts vanish like smoke!—fresh, natural, unforced gooseberries are somewhat of a rarity then. Beef and ham, and fowl and tongue, disappear miraculously ; while with the liberality, and almost with the celerity, of the Slaves of the Lamp, the happy servants —themselves equipped for flight,— bring reinforcements of provisions more —yes, it is in Lancashire !—more than proportioned to the

succession of hungry mouths that crowd round them. Ladies that pick daintily as a bird at other times will positively take a raised pie in their fingers and eat it as if they enjoyed it. As to the gentlemen, they think the having dinner an hour or two later than usual sufficient excuse for eating enough for a week. *N'importe.* Everybody is busy, and bustling, and good humoured,

> "For the races come but once a year,
> And to them we will go,"

as said the cook when her mistress was giving her some orders at the beginning of the race-week.

"But I can't do it then, ma'am, I shall be at the races."

"No, indeed, Betty, you can't go that day."

"Indeed, ma'am, I must go all three days. I 'll work like a slave to please you between times, but three days I must go."

"You cannot, Betty: you shall go one day with pleasure; a second if possible; but certainly not three; your fellow-servants must have their turns."

"I don't care, ma'am; I never missed a day in my life, and I never will; I 'll go all three days."

"Very well, Betty, be it so: but you will prepare to quit your place; you have hitherto suited me very well, but if you break my rules of course you quit my house."

"Very well ma'am; it 's not the first place I 've given up for it."

"But are you not foolish, if you like your situation?"

"I like my place very well, ma'am; I never had a better; but I always did go three days to the races, and I 've quarreled with many a mistress for it: and I 'll not stop now."

The lady turned away; but before she reached the parlour she heard her servant chanting a melodious finale to the argument,

> "For the races come but once a year,
> And to them I will go."

And she did.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MANCHESTER RACES.

"So floats our life down time's rough stream,
Such is its constant motion ;
And bubbles on the land will gleam
Like bubbles on the ocean."

REV. R. PARKINSON.

HASTEN we now to the busy scene which is considered to be without parallel in England. These races are the annual carnival of the cotton operatives, and Kersal Moor—the scene of their enaction—is literally swamped throughout its length and breadth by the mass of plebeianism congregated on it. The GREAT UNWASHED are lords paramount of the time, and for three days they "fool it to the top of their bent." So decidedly, indeed, has this been the characteristic of the Manchester races, that the sport itself exhibited here has been but lightly esteemed by the "knowing-

ones" of the turf until of late years, when greater inducements have been thrown out, and greater exertions made—and with good effect—to induce the leading professors of the sublime science of horse-racing to honour this meeting with their presence. A new grand stand was erected a few years ago—which is remarkable only for the peculiar advantage of being on the wrong side of the course—and hither congregate the families of the Cotton-ocracy, together with such "shining ornaments of the turf" as chance, or whim, or interest, may draw from afar. But the gentility is but as a drop in the ocean of plebeianism, and the race itself is the least important attraction to nine tenths of the people congregated there. Those on, or in the immediate neighbourhood of the grand stand do take, or profess to take, some interest in it; and doubtless around the starting chair, and so on, are collected real lovers of the sport; but this is not the case with the general mass, whose hundred varied amusements are proceeding often with perfect indifference to the race, and almost up to the very cords of the course itself.

Kersal Moor was, some years ago, a wild and beautiful scene. The increase of population around, and the forming of the new Bury road so near it, are causing a complete subversion of its natural features. Flaring brick mansions are starting up, tall chimneys are emitting their volumes of smoke, and the whole district gives token of the improver's—or, as regards the picturesque,—the destroyer's hand. But until very late years Kersal Moor was, as its name imports, a wide tract of moorland, beautifully diversified into hill and dale, and thickly bestrewn with cranberry and bilberry bushes, and with the most varied and delicate heaths and bog-plants. Here, of yore, the air was resonant with the wild hymns of myriads of nature's choristers, and thousands of larks soared to heaven, and dropped fearlessly on their then secure, though unhidden nests; the bees reveled in the fragrant heaths; and the wild rabbits burrowed in the unmolested soil. And if, when the lightning flashed, and the tempest howled, the shrill cry of the unhallowed witch—that bane of Lancashire —pierced the startled air, or her shrouded form was dimly seen athwart the gloom, yet

more often, more frequent, was the revel of the tiny fairies among the mossy hollows, or the joyous gala of the blackberry-loving group amid the woody dingles.

From the eminences on the north side of the moor you have at your feet "The course;" and right in front you trace the meanderings of the sparkling river in the romantic and beautiful vale of Broughton; further on the spires of the Manchester churches gleam in the sunshine which is shedding a softened radiance on the distant hills. On both sides of the course, on the slopes of the hills, and in many of the sheltered nooks, are long rows of seats of turf, placed as closely and as regularly as forms or benches would be for a meeting. These, artificial of course, originally, appear now but as part and parcel of the moor itself. Over these the operative *Restaurateurs* erect their tents, and thus have internal accommodation almost ready to their hand.

But this is, or rather was, Kersal Moor on a fine day, a quiet day, and assuredly not on a race day. For then one hundred thousand people are congregated with, as it should seem,

the one sole view of utterly annihilating every vestige by which the original features of the spot might be traced. The roads and avenues on every side are thronged with approaching vehicles of every sort, size, shape, and make; and all around as far as the eye can reach, hill and hollow present one dense mass of human beings, intermixed with dogs, horses, carriages, shows, booths, tents, stands, and all the interminable *mirabilia* which are to be seen only at this carnival of the "Great Unwashed!" As to the conflicting noises!—Babel itself must have been harmonious compared with them.

The hollow on the Broughton side of the course is usually appropriated to the shows, &c.; which are removed hither from the Whitsuntide fair, held in Salford. Here are wonders without end or measure. There is a giant with six fingers on each hand, and a dwarf without any hands at all. There is a pig with two heads, and a sheep with six feet, and a prize ox—the last importation from Yankee land—which was so large that it could hardly get into England at all. On one hand you are invited to see a hero "bewitch the

world with gallant horsemanship," as he fairly bestrides six horses at a time; or if this be too sublime a pitch for your aim, you may, for the same moderate price, accompany the "tailor to Brentford."

For three copper impresses of royalty you may behold the "*Sublime and moving tragedy* of the FATAL RING, or the BLOODY SPIRIT of the CASTLE; showing how a *beautiful and elegant young lady* was *spirited* away by the wicked devices of her faithless lover; and how she was CRUELLY MURDERED; and how her *bloody spirit* ever after HAUNTED the place; and how her *faithless lover* disappeared in a SHEET OF FLAME; with all the *sublime*, and *moving*, and *touching*, and *wonderful* catastrophe; being a *wonderful representation* of TRUE FACTS." Then there is "a true likeness of the Duke of Wellington in the act of leading the Imperial Guards to the charge of Waterloo when the Prussians were overthrown, and Paris was sacked, and the glorious freedom of England's rights established for ever."

"There you see," exclaims the eloquent showman, "There you see the glorious duke

leading them on, and there 's the great Marshal Blucher—"

"Please, sir, which is the Duke of Wellington, and which is Marshal Blucher?"

"Whichever you please, my pretty dear! There you see—"

The royal din of the beefeaters' horns attracts you to the spot where the wild denizens of the forest are enthralled. "Walk in, ladies and gemmen, walk in!—walk in and see the beasts and beastesses. Here 's a royal Bengal tiger what comes from Bottomless Bay in the West Ingies: there 's no two spots on his body alike, and all of 'em different!—he measures seven feet five inches from the tip of his tail to his snout, and nine feet six inches from his snout to the tip of his tail! Here 's the great sea-serpent from the Equator, that followed Captain Parry to the North Pole, and stung seventeen sailors to death before he was taken! —Walk in, ladies and gemmen, walk in!"

Between and around these sublime spectacles are boys with hurdy-gurdies and white mice; with barrel-organs and dancing-dogs; with French pianos and tame monkeys. There are old women bawling "Last dying speech and

confession," and younger ones with touching ditties—

> " Of tales of love, and maids forsaken,
> Of battles fought, and captives taken."

There are old Jew pedlars with Turkey rhubarb, and other delights; and itinerant mediciners, one with the " Original infallible salve for corns and bunions," and another with " The *real* original infallible salve for bunions and corns of all sorts; for hard corns, soft corns, and for bloody corns;" and they have also in juxta-position mint-cake, lollipops, " real original Ormskirk gingerbread," and genu*ine* Eccles cake.

There are beggars of all sorts: some wed soft music to immortal verse—

> " And when you hear my great misfortune
> I hope to pity you 'll incline—

for, ladies and gentlemen, I 'm qui-i-ite blind!" Another, less melodious, but quite as pathetic, whose weathered chin seemed to have endured the scrapes of some five-and-forty summers, touchingly implores your charity, for he was " blind at his birth, and is a *poor orphan.*"

Conjuring,—box i' th' hole,—kiss i' th' ring,

— thimble-rig, — and archery, have all their scientific professors, and their ardent aspirants; foot-races and donkey-races are got up with a facility that is perfectly astonishing to those who don't remember the adage that "where there's a will there's a way." Betting and gambling are the order of the day; blackguardism and quarreling are necessary concomitants; and "all the 'currents of a heady fight," are visible at all times in almost every direction.

But the operative frequenters of the races are not all intent on sport. Many go for pleasure, for relaxation, for change; and numbers go for no definite object either of business or pleasure, but, as we said before, merely because it is not possible to stay away. The following colloquy is given *verbatim* :—

"Well, Agnes," said Betty, "who 'd ha'e thought o' seeing thee here! How 's thy husband?"

"Oh! he's vast bad, Betty: oh! if it would but please the Lord to tak' him to hisself, it would be a blessed thing for me!"

"Ay, so it would forshure! thou'st a weary life wi' him!"

" You may say that: but how 's little Lizzy ?"

" Oh ! Lizzy's dying: I 'm sure on 't."

" You don't say so ! What does its father say ?"

" Oh ! Davvid takes on sadly !—but I says to him, ' Davvid,' I says, ' thee needn't fret about Lizzy, for if the Lord chooses to tak Lizzy to hisself, we 'st ne 'er hear no bad o' her, and the Lord 'll do better for her than we can; besides, Davvid,' I says, ' it may please the Lord for her to get better, then, sure, thee needn't fret !' "

But the signal is given to clear the course, and the scene changes in an instant. The people who had been refreshing in the booths beneath the stands, rush to the seats above, and the frail-looking buildings are crowded to intensity; the tents pour out their myriads; the thimble-riggers lose their customers; the embryo bets and incipient fights are post-poned; all rush towards the course, and the moor is alive with expectation. The hills on all sides are crowded with gazers; the whole intervening space is, with the bare exception of the course, a dense mass, a wedge of eager

participants. The balcony of the grand stand is crowded with ladies; the roof is thronged with the gentlemen most eager in the sport.

"My lord, I offer fifty to two on Black cap."

"*I* usually bet with *gentlemen*."

"My lord, if you 're disposed to sell your rent-roll, I 'll lay down the ready this evening."

The conscious nobleman turned away, and the cotton lord enjoyed his vulgar triumph.

But now were all hearts and eyes on the *qui vive*, for the grand race of the day was about to commence. It is said that The Cup is always given to the "prettiest girl" on the grand stand to hold whilst it is run for. This is not invariably the case; but certainly on this day there was not even a dissentient whisper when the steward gallantly presented the golden vase to Miss Langshawe. Her mother's face beamed with delight, and her father, though he pretended to ridicule the circumstance, evinced no dissatisfaction. The excitement of the scene had restored the bloom to her face, and it was not lessened by the consciousness of Mr. Walmsley's presence. He had greeted her merely by a distant bow, and she felt, rather than saw, that though he was

ostensibly occupied with another party, he regarded her with undeviating attention. She saw his start of pleasure as the cup was presented to her, and she felt a degree of comparative happiness in the certainty thus afforded of his continued interest in her. Under the influence of this pleasing thought she bore Mr. John Balshawe's assiduities with a complacency which that gentleman attributed entirely to his own merits; and she listened to the jokes of Mr. Ashworth with something of her accustomed hilarity.

Far differently was Mr. Walmsley influenced. Young Balshawe's attentions were too pointed to escape the notice of a jealous lover, and the seeming satisfaction with which Edith listened—a satisfaction originating, in fact, in circumstances most flattering to himself—were attributed by Frank, not unnaturally, to causes the very reverse of those really in operation. With contending, but smothered feelings of regret, mortification and anger, he continued to watch her whilst ostensibly engaged with his own circle.

Meanwhile the day passes, and the sports close; and if anything can exceed the intense

eagerness to reach the course, it is the mad impetuosity displayed in leaving it. Risk of life or limb seems of little consequence compared with the glory of being foremost in the homeward race. So exciting is this feeling that it influences those who have really little taste for the sport, and no interest in the race. For instance, we knew an elderly and somewhat grave gentleman, who was taking his accustomed ride, and slowly paced towards the moor from no other earthly reason than the impossibility which a Manchester man feels of keeping away from it; and turning down one of the lanes which leads from the high road to the scene of action he perceived that the race was over. Instantly he turned his horse's head, and scampered homeward.

"Is the race over?" cries one.

"Yes."

"Who's won?"

On he went, conveniently deaf.

"Who's won? who's won?"

On he went.

The turnpike-gate, like the one in John Gilpin's famous race of yore, "flew wide at his approach."

"Who 's won?" said the gate-keeper.

"I haven't time to tell you."

"Rat it, mon," said the sage of the pike, scratching his head, "thee moight ha tell't one i'less toime than thee 's takken to say noy."

On he went, but ere he entered his own house he had provided himself with a return list.

As Mr. Walmsley was threading his way homeward on horseback along a lane literally choked with carriages, he observed some stoppage a little onward, accompanied with all the vociferous confusion usually attendant on such a circumstance; and looking more earnestly, for he recognised the liveries of the carriage from which the general halt originated, he saw Miss Langshawe look from the window with alarm depicted on her countenance. In a moment he was at the spot, had opened the carriage-door, and was assisting the terrified ladies to alight, whilst Mr. John Balshawe, who acted as charioteer, was vociferously calling to them to keep their seats. However, finding he was not heeded, he resigned the reins to the attendants who were

busied in disengaging the wheel which was fast locked with that of another chariot, and followed the ladies to a little recess, formed by a gate in the road side, whither for momentary safety Mr. Walmsley had conducted them. He impetuously reproached them for leaving the carriage, and called Mr. Walmsley "a d—d fool for his pains." Frank bit his lip, but took no notice; but Balshawe, irritated at the accident his own mad driving had caused, stimulated perhaps a little by liquor, and stung with vexation and jealousy at the evident reliance with which both Mrs. Langshawe and her daughter clung to Mr. Walmsley, loaded him with epithets too reproachful and abusive for any gentleman to endure.

In the meantime others had surrounded them with offers of assistance. But the carriage was by this time disentangled, and the ladies were replaced in it, Mrs. Langshawe having insisted that Mr. Balshawe should resign the reins to her own coachman. To this regulation the gentleman, albeit very sulkily, submitted. As soon as the carriage-door had closed on them, Mr. Walmsley touched Mr. Balshawe's arm.

"Hark ye, sir, I am not such a coward as to bully before ladies! here is my card; may I beg the honour of your address?"

This was certainly not exactly what Mr. John Balshawe had calculated on; but he gave his card with a good grace, and took his place by the side of the coachman.

All this had passed in much less time than it has taken to write it; but Edith's quick heart instantly divined the whole, when she found there was a momentary delay in Mr. Balshawe's mounting the box, and saw a card in his hand as he did so.

When Mr. Langshawe, who had been escorting a friend in his gig, arrived at home, he was informed by his wife of the accident, and also that Edith had a bad head-ache with the fright, and had retired to lie down, but would rejoin the party at dessert.

Hundreds, we might almost say thousands, of the operatives and lower classes remain on the ground all night; many in necessary care of their property; many with prudent forethought, to be ready for the business or the pleasure of the ensuing day; many from reckless and careless joviality; and not

a few from brutal intoxication. The last legitimate race day is Friday; but there are always donkey-races, wrestling and boxing matches on Saturday; and miserable is the spectacle which this erstwhile quiet and beauful spot exhibits on Sunday; though, as far as possible, the authorities have the ground cleared of all its temporary erections against that day—but miserable at all times, and in all circumstances, is the ghost of departed revelry.

The most attractive feature of the Manchester race week is the exhibition it affords of generous, general, open, hearty hospitality—that winning unpretending hospitality which, forgetting form and etiquette in the feelings of cordial liberality, is a distinctive characteristic of Lancashire, where it prevails to a degree which might surprise the more courtly and cultivated but etiquette-ruled inhabitants of the south. But at no season of the year is this beguiling quality so universally diffused, so openly displayed, as in the race week. Every house is stretched to more than its full dimensions; every table is crowded with more than its legitimate complement of covers; every

door is open, and every visitor welcome. The evenings are passed in social *réunions*, which are frequently more regarded than the morning entertainments. These are interrupted on the Thursday evening by a race ball, which somewhat resembles the sports on "The Moor," inasmuch as it is not the most *recherché* affair possible; and on Saturday night the race-stewards bespeak a play; the theatre—which is considered an elegant one — is crowded from pit to ceiling; and amid the obstreperous din of the gods above, and the jovial participation of the boisterous revellers below, the energetic apostrophes of the heroes of the buskin are audible or not, as the case may be.

Thus ends the Race Week!

CHAPTER XVII.

NOT A DUEL.

"I will ease my heart,
Although it be with hazard of my head."
SHAKSPEARE.

In no very enviable mood, Mr. Walmsley remounted after the fracas mentioned in the last chapter, and turned his horse's head from the moor. He did not, however, go towards Manchester, for he was in no humour immediately to join the gay circle which he knew would be assembled at his uncle's. He was at once proud and angry, hopeful and desponding. He was proud of the evident reliance Mrs. and Miss Langshawe, and especially the latter, placed in him when he proffered his assistance; but he was stung with mortification when he called to mind Edith's cheerful countenance and the encouragement she

had throughout the day displayed to the very man whose vulgar and fool-hardy conduct had subsequently placed her life in jeopardy, and who had vented on himself epithets under which it was impossible any gentleman could remain quiet. Then, he could not understand Miss Langshawe's conduct. That she was sincerely attached to him he had once no doubt; had she not, at any rate, allowed him unreproved, to infer as much? and had she not appeared literally broken-hearted when her father so harshly and unhesitatingly checked their young hopes? Yes, indeed, she had; and deeply in his own heart had he blessed her for it at the time; and yet, now—only so short a time after the occurrence, that every incident, nay, indeed, even the thoughts of each moment were vivid on his mind as if now occurring, even so soon had she, in his very presence, and before a host of witnesses, dealt out smiles and encouragement most liberally to another, and that other one, certainly, Frank thought, not altogether such as he should have imagined Miss Langshawe would have preferred to himself. But, thought he, very heroically, if she prefers this gentleman — why let her.

And then again he checked himself. Was he not giving the reins too wildly to his imaginations? Had she, after all, paid more attention to this gentleman than other young ladies had done to those who happened to be with them? And had he not—though once only, and that but instantaneously—caught Edith's eye fixed on himself with anything but a mirthful expression. He tried to take great comfort from this recollection; but another, equally sudden, rushed across his mind and quickly disturbed his incipient equanimity. This was the remembrance of the insulting epithets heaped on him by Mr. John Balshawe, and he instantaneously resolved that he *must* have satisfaction.

They say you have only to wish for the devil, and you find him at your elbow. He appeared now in the shape of an old school acquaintance of Frank's, with whom he was on the best terms when they did meet, though little intercourse was kept up between them.

Mr. Walmsley had got into a bye lane, so entirely cut off from the scene of the late bustle, that it was with some surprise he heard the tramp of a horse's feet behind him. He

turned and saw a genteel young man, with an open and most engaging countenance.

"Why, Walmsley, is that you?"

"My dear Wolstenholme," said Frank, "you are the very man of all others I wished to see."

"Well, Frank, I must say, that if you wanted me, this was a strange place to seek me in."

"A truce with your jests; I did not say I was looking for you, but that I wished to see you. Will you do me a kindness?"

"Can you doubt it?"

"I want you to carry me a message—"

"A message!"

"To Mr. John Balshawe: he has insulted me grossly."

"How so?"

Frank related.

All trace of pleasantry had disappeared from Henry Wolstenholme's face, and he said, very earnestly and very seriously,

"Walmsley, you must not do this."

"I requested your assistance, not your advice," said Frank, haughtily.

"My dear Frank, you may be as tart as

you please, you shall not make me quarrel with you: we are old friends and school-fellows, and I will not, if I can help it, see you throw yourself away for a vulgar brawl of this sort."

"And do you call yourself my friend, Henry, and yet counsel me tamely to submit to insult?"

"By no means, by no manner of means; but why throw your pearls before swine? why offer gentlemanly weapons to a vulgar coxcomb? why risk your own life for one who is not worth your little finger? No, no; my advice is, that you shake your cane over his shoulders on 'Change next Tuesday."

"And so have the whole host of the cotton-ocracy raising their hands and most sweet voices in tradesman-like horror at their sanctuary being polluted, and that, too, by a reckless youth ignorant of the mysteries of cotton-twist! No, no, that won't do! However, you will at all events keep counsel, if you will not help me; and I must apply to some one else."

"No, Walmsley, that you shall not do: if this affair must be gone on with, I will undertake the task; though I do freely confess that

I do it chiefly in the hope of bringing it to an amicable conclusion."

"Keep faith with me, Wolstenholme; a full, open, apology—nothing less—or—"

"Make yourself easy; I know as well as you do what is due to a gentleman."

Frank then proceeded to explain further; that he believed Mr. John Balshawe was staying at Lime Grove; but that he was sure his friend would proceed cautiously, so as to give no hint of his purpose to any of the family; but Mr. Wolstenholme hastened to put an end to these instructions, by the information that he and his sister were also visitors there, having come for the races.

The friends then shook hands and parted.

Great was the hilarity at Mr. Langshawe's this evening; for at this joyous season every house is open, and every chance caller receives a cordial and hearty welcome. Etiquette is laid aside, and even those differences of rank and caste which, probably from their being less clearly definable, are usually more rigidly adhered to in Manchester than elsewhere—even these are by no means insisted on at "Race-time."

"Edith, what is the matter with you?" said Harriet Wolstenholme, as they passed from the dining-room; "you 're grave, and pale, and melancholy, and not at all like yourself. Got a head-ache!—pooh! I don't believe it: you never used to have head-aches. What should give you a head-ache?"

"Nothing."

"Why, no—don't I say there 's nothing. But, however, if we really must have a make-believe head-ache, come this way quietly, and leave all those vulgar folks to their tea and their scandal. Your mother can do the honours in both."

"Harriet, I will not have it—"

"Well, there now: I did but want to see whether you were alive or not. Bless me—I quiz my own mother often enough."

"That may be—but you shall not quiz mine."

"But I shall if I choose. I tell you what, Edith, you are, to borrow the elegant expression with which your adorer, Mr. John Balshawe, addressed his groom—'you are as surly as a bear with a sore ear.'"

"Am I?" said Edith, very quietly; and her friend, to her discomfort and astonishment, instead of the laugh which she expected, saw tears trickling down her cheeks.

"My dear, dear Edith," said she, throwing her arm round her, "what is the meaning of all this? I only meant to amuse you; I would not hurt you for the world!"

"I know you would not," said Edith, returning the caress.

"Then tell me what is the matter?"

"Only this: Mr. Balshawe in driving us home got the carriage entangled; we were indebted to Mr. Walmsley for assistance, and—and—I don't know exactly how it happened, but there passed hard words between them."

"Well—what then?"

"I'm afraid of consequences."

"Pooh! two brawling boys."

"Mr. Walmsley is no brawling boy, Harriet. His face, his lips, were perfectly white with suppressed passion—but he never spoke—*while we were present.*"

"Tell your father, Edith."

"Not for the world: my father is too much prejudiced against Mr. Walmsley already."

The words were very simple; but Edith's manner, and the sudden burst of tears, opened a volume to her quick-minded friend, who had not been many hours in the house with Miss Langshawe ere she discovered that some shadow was over her spirits, though both affection and delicacy had prevented her from remarking on the change. Now, she shrewdly suspected the cause.

Miss Wolstenholme was two or three years older than Edith; but they had continual intercourse as children, and this intercourse had ripened into affectionate intimacy during the time they were domiciled together beneath the roof of Mrs. Maitland for their education.

Never was the adage of opposites making the best friends more fully exemplified than in the present case. Miss Wolstenholme was the very reverse of Edith, who, though gay, playful, and animated, was still quiet, retiring, and often thoughtful. Miss Harriet Wolstenholme was unbounded in her glee, untameable in her mirth; she quizzed her parents, tormented her brother, laughed at her friends, and was indeed, as her father said, perfectly intractable. In company her gaiety and mirth were so un-

bounded, so unvarying, that Mr. Ashworth, with whom she usually carried on a sort of wordy warfare, a "keen encounter," as Benedict calls it, of wits, had that very morning, with most elaborate emphasis, addressed her in the words of the poet—

> "Prythee, weep, May Lilian!
> Gaiety without eclipse
> Wearieth me, May Lilian."

But she could be steady on occasion, and she now soothed Edith, by representing to her that Mr. Balshawe was at the dinner-table as usual, and therefore, at present all was right; and she proposed that they should return to the company and closely watch his movements. They went round through the offices, where Edith stayed to give some orders, and as Miss Wolstenholme went on towards the drawing-room, she was surprised to see two gentlemen dart somewhat suddenly into an apartment opening from the passage she was traversing. She felt sure that one of them was her brother, and partly in mischief determined to follow him, as her intimate acquaintance with the geography of the house led her to know that visitors were not expected to be there. Just as

she had her hand on the door, she heard a voice which she knew to be Mr. John Balshawe's, and from a word or two which instantaneously caught her ear — "I shall make none—name your place and time"— the truth flashed on her mind. She had observed that her brother was grave and absent at dinner; he had come in late, too, and when she questioned him, he said he had been with Mr. Walmsley, and then abruptly stopped and turned away, as if he had said more than he intended.

She hesitated one moment — but the next her resolution was taken. She speeded swiftly and quietly away, and sent a footman to Mr. Ashworth, who had not left the dining-room, to say that he was wanted without. He came directly, but was surprised to find no one in the room to which he was summoned but Miss Wolstenholme.

"I sent for you, Mr. Ashworth; I want your assistance."

"I'm sure, my fair queen of mirth," said he, thinking some joke was a-foot, "you may command me."

"I am in earnest, sir, and serious."

Mr. Ashworth looked at her for a moment,

and then in the most kindly and respectful manner asked what he could do for her.

She related the fracas between the two young men; told him her reasons for supposing that something further was in agitation; said that she knew him to be a personal friend of one of the parties, and that she had applied to him simply to avoid putting Mr. Langshawe in a painful situation in his own house, (which though the truth, was, it must be confessed, hardly *all* the truth,) and that though he, Mr. Ashworth, might think she was making too much of the matter, it was one of those cases in which prevention was much easier than cure.

Mr. Ashworth looked at her in evident admiration of the unwonted steadiness she displayed; and then told her to make herself perfectly easy, that everything was in good time owing to her promptitude, and that he would take all responsibility on himself.

She returned to the drawing-room, where also came soon her brother and Mr. John Balshawe, the latter appearing just as usual, but in the former *she* detected an unwonted exertion to be gay.

In about an hour Mr. Ashworth came in, gay and smiling as usual. He did not immediately approach Miss Wolstenholme, but in a short time he did so unobserved, and whispered in her ear the comforting tidings, that a messenger was on his road to arrest Mr. Walmsley, and that Mr. Balshawe would be "nabbed" the moment he crossed the threshold.

"And what then?"

"They will be bound over to keep the peace."

"Yes, yes; I had forgotten." And happy and relieved, she went to whisper the agreeable news to Edith.

On the ensuing morning the usual pacificatory measures were taken by the magistrate, to which, it must be confessed, Mr. Walmsley appeared the most opposed. He imagined too, and not without some apparent reason, that his friend Henry Wolstenholme had been playing him false, and had given information, at the same time that he professed to be forwarding their proceedings. On this point, however, Mr. Ashworth set him right.

But before the legal engagements could be

entered into their necessity was superseded by the manly apology — not the less thought of from its being totally unexpected — proffered by Mr. John Balshawe.

"He thought before, and he still thought, that Mr. Walmsley would have done better not to meddle with the carriage, and he was in a passion at his doing so, and perhaps said some things he had better have let alone. If so, he was sorry for it."

"And why, sir," inquired the magistrate, "why did you so positively refuse any apology yesterday, when Mr. Walmsley's friend waited on you?"

"Because my blood was up; he hadn't given me time to cool. Besides, I 'm no coward! and I didn't wish them to think they could frighten me into an apology."

Thus the matter ended, except that Mr. Langshawe, who had learned what was occurring, and was now present, could not repress his joyous admiration of Mr. Balshawe's conduct, while, though he was too generous to express it, poor Walmsley sank proportionally in his esteem.

"He knew not," he said, "what tradesmen

had to do with duelling; it was quite inconsistent with their habits and stations. Quarrels would occur occasionally, but a good ash plant was infinitely a more manly weapon than a pistol: fitter for an Englishman in every way, and certainly more suitable to a tradesman."

CHAPTER XVIII.

GOING ABROAD.

"Good sir, I do in friendship counsel you
To leave this place."

SHAKSPEARE.

MR. AINSLEY and his nephew were seated over their wine in a room which, though spacious and convenient, had little of ornament except the paintings with which the walls were covered. There were a few originals of some of those mighty spirits whose works still breathe the inspiration of beauty into thousands, while the hands which traced them have long mouldered into dust; and there was a greater variety of works of English artists, amongst which some of Gainsborough's beautiful landscapes, and of Morland's exquisite cottage groups, were the most conspicuous.

But the beauties alike of foreign or English artists were lost upon Frank Walmsley, as he

sate chipping a small piece of candied orange-peel into as great a multitude of fragments as if he were intent on giving ocular proof of the theory respecting the infinite divisibility of matter; but his thoughts were truly far enough from his occupation, and from the place and presence in which his mortal frame then sojourned. It may readily be imagined, therefore, that he was not the most enlivening companion in the world; and, after many ineffectual attempts to draw him into conversation, his uncle fairly gave him up to the luxury of his own meditations.

But, in good sooth, they were not of a very exhilarating tendency. He had just heard—a St. Ann's Square *on dit*—that Miss Langshawe was engaged to be married to Mr. John Balshawe. The report was totally false, and in a cooler moment Frank would have seen (and did see) that it was so; but just now he was but too much disposed to give credence to the fabrication. It tallied well with the polite courtesies, which he had construed into encouraging smiles, of Edith to young Balshawe, in the race-stand: it tallied well with Mr. Balshawe's assumption of authority in the

drive home: it tallied well with the presence, and most encouraging and approving support of that gentleman by Mr. Langshawe in the magistrate's office: it tallied well with the irate father's explicit declaration on a former occasion, that Mr. Walmsley's attentions were unwelcome, because *he had other views* for his daughter: it tallied well with the knowledge he possessed that John Balshawe was still abiding at Lime Grove — still — long after all the race-week visitors had departed. It was a marriage of particular fitness too. Mr. John Balshawe was of a suitable age, of her own rank in life, a very personable young man, heir to a considerable fortune, partner in a flourishing trade, and,—over and above all—a man of business habits, which his contemned rival decidedly was not. Oh! there could be no hesitation about the matter; it was so beyond the shadow of a doubt.

[Oh, Frank! Frank! will you not hereafter repent your hasty credulity, in dust and ashes?]

But Frank's time for repentance was not yet come. His mind was made up; at least he thought it was, and acted accordingly.

"Uncle," said he.

His uncle started, for he too had become absorbed in his own meditations: and Frank was shocked to see his uncle's start; he was becoming nervous; he felt his courage, like that of a certain celebrated hero, whose Christian name was "Bob," oozing out rapidly at his "finger-ends." He rallied himself, however, and screwed up his courage to the sticking point.

"Uncle, you have often said that you thought a short delay before my entering on my profession might be no disadvantage to me."

"That would entirely depend on the manner in which the time occupied in that delay was appropriated. I am certainly of opinion that in any profession, requiring the exercise of skill and judgment, as that of a barrister certainly does, the added experience of a few years cannot but be advantageous."

"I do not want to trifle my time away, I do assure you."

"Tell me plainly what you do want, Frank; unless you are explicit it is impossible that I can judge for you, or advise you."

"I wish to travel for a year or two, sir."

"And I have not the slightest objection to your doing so."

"Thank you, my dear uncle, thank you: you are very good, very generous to me."

This ebullition of gratitude on the part of his nephew somewhat touched Mr. Ainsley, more especially as his conscience told him he did not quite so fully deserve it as the young man thought. True indeed it was that Frank's well-doing was the one object nearest to his heart, and to promote that he would readily have furnished funds for one year's travelling, or ten years';—it would have made no difference to him. But he felt inwardly conscious that a leading motive with him now was to effect Frank's separation from Miss Langshawe; more especially, as he perceived, or rather suspected, that his nephew was under a false impression with regard to that lady. *He* also had watched her closely in the race-stand; he had observed her open smiles, her courteous complaisance to John Balshawe, but he had also noted, far, far more accurately than his nephew had done, her anxious stolen glances at a cavalier, who stood aloof, a certain Frank Walmsley. He had also heard the report of her

intended marriage with Mr. Balshawe, but seeing what he had seen, he attached not the slightest credence to it. Mr. Ainsley, the old bachelor, was, as the ladies often said, a shrewd observer.

But, firm in his purpose, and acting, as he sincerely believed, with a single-hearted view to Frank's ultimate welfare, the discovery of Miss Langshawe's *non*-indifference only made him the more anxious to remove his nephew from the sphere of her influence. Hence, his earnestly-ready acquiescence in Frank's expression of a wish to travel; and hence, also, the gentle self-upbraidings when his nephew turned his truthful open countenance in thankfulness upon him.

"And where do you propose to go, Frank?"

"Indeed I have not decided; have, in fact, hardly given it a thought. I wish to leave England for some time; but I do assure you that I have no intention of trifling away my time; neither do I wish to remain long a mere burthen on your generosity—but—"

"My dear boy," said Mr. Ainsley, interrupting him, "say nothing on that point. I am sincerely pleased at your intention of tra-

velling: it is exactly what I wished. With regard to means—your uniformly unexceptionable conduct hitherto, Frank, deserves confidence and liberality—it shall find both. I am sure you will not abuse my confidence. I give you unlimited leave of absence, and when I am fully informed of your route, you shall have letters of credit in every city on its line. Only remember, that you leave one at home who will feel lonely till your return, and whose happiness is involved in your own well-doing."

Frank was too much touched to reply; nor did his uncle renew the conversation for some time. At length he did so, but in a style that made Frank smile in spite of himself.

"I see what you 're smiling at, you saucy dog: you have some of your infamous witticisms about 'the system,' or 'the shop,' at your tongue's end. I see you have."

"No, indeed, uncle—"

"Hold your tongue, sir, and don't add falsehood to impudence. I repeat, that you may do me effectual service by proceeding straight to Genoa; and your taking Italy first, cannot, I should think, make any material difference in your line of route."

"Seeing that I have no 'line,' probably it may not," said Frank gravely.

Mr. Ainsley only laughed at his nephew's sauciness, and proceeded. "The commissions with which I shall trouble you are such as need give you no uneasiness, or particular trouble in the detail. They are such as any man of intelligent mind may at once fully comprehend. That they have not been executed before this time has been because I wished them to be undertaken by some one of liberal gentlemanly mind, and refined manners. And our 'system,' Master Frank, does not produce 'travellers' of that description every day. Mr. Luttrell is a very old gentleman; but if my impression be correct, you will find him, though a tradesman, 'every inch a gentleman,' and a man of much information and hospitable habits. I, on my part, shall feel both pride and pleasure in preparing him for your visit."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SPELL.

"Here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sandpiper:
And on these barren rocks, with fern and heath,
And juniper and thistle, sprinkled o'er,
Fixing his downcast eye, for many an hour."

WORDSWORTH.

"Be, be it so, and let this be,
A divination unto me."

HERRICK.

In the wildest part of Lancashire, amid those desolate moors and heaths, some of which yet remain untamed, and rise in rugged and solitary majesty even in that county which is supposed by many to be from Alpha to Omega one unbroken mass of cotton factories—in such a region, in a lowly and lonely cottage, whose thatched roof seemed almost

part and parcel of the steep and rugged hill which rising abruptly behind it, sheltered it from the northern blasts, while in front and around for miles spread a desolate and barren moor — barren save for its myriad of beautiful heath-plants, which refreshed the eye, its profusion of cranberries and winberries, pleasant to the taste, its numerous medicinal herbs, valuable to the sick — desolate, save for the numerous flocks of mountain sheep which cropped a wholesome pasture, and its multitude of heath birds which flew around in gladness, unconscious of their enemy man, and ever and anon dipped their wing in a mountain brook which brawled noisily and sparklingly along—in such a spot and in such a cottage lives, or did live at no very distant period, one but slightly indeed connected with our tale, but to whom we shall, "for auld lang syne," dedicate a few lines.

He was formed in nature's largest mould, and his stalwart limbs were well-proportioned and strongly knit. His dark but silver-streaked hair shaded a countenance hardly and strongly, but kindly drawn; features homely but intelligent. His manners were as uncul-

tivated as it was possible they could be, his dialect as broad as the broadest of Lancashire's sons could revel in, yet an earnest desire to oblige and to please — an innate principle which governed his conduct—joined to a naturally superior and a not uncultivated mind, and the tone of thought, which his peculiar habits induced, rendered him frequently an interesting companion.

He conversed with nature in every shape; and the sportive fairies who haunt the sweet dingles and bosky dells of his native county, or the midnight witches who hold their unhallowed revels on the blasted heaths and desolate wilds, which, anciently the general reproach of Lancashire, still spread their untamed solitudes amid her recesses—these he called up at will and without effort, investing them with lith and limb, with life and reality, so that scarcely have you ceased shuddering at the vivid portraiture of the one ere you find yourself gently tripping the daisy-spangled sod with the other. You watch the vivid flashing of his grey eye, and the muscular workings of his strongly-marked countenance, and while the tones of his deep voice thrill

on your nerves you see before you the varied picture which he draws.

Now you listen to his awakened inspiration, and far around you spreads a stony heath, breathing desolation. Far, far as the eye can reach in its frightened glance nought is seen but solitude wild and bare; nor flock, nor herd, nor human creature, nor sparkling rivulet, nor bosky-dell, nought is there to gladden the eye or relieve the cheerless and gloomy quiet. The dull uniformity is only broken by the shattered trunk of one enormous pine, which, struck by lightning, spreads its blasted and blackened arms athwart the sky, which night is fast shrouding in her sable robe.

In the west, the sun is sinking like a globe of crimson fire, and, reflected through the gloom and mist, his vehement rays dart on the scathed tree and gleam on its gnarled branches with a lurid and unnatural lustre, which they also impart to the unholy object at its foot. There—her grey hair floating on the wind, her tall form enveloped in a scarlet cloak, scarcely concealing her shriveled flesh, and with one bare and withered arm extended,

IS THE LATEST WITCH OF LANCASHIRE. Her keen grey eyes, of evil omen, are piercing through the gloom, her skinny lips move as if imprecating curses, "deep not loud," and her arm, which slowly waves in the heavy air as if to assist her unholy spell, is attenuated and dry, till the veins, the very sluices of health and beauty in others, in her appear

> "Like worms that have begun to glide
> Around her carcass ere she died."

Such dread beings does this village bard call up effortless, to chill the tide of mirth as it flows from the lips of thoughtless youth and placid beauty; and whilst the spell of his sorcery is yet upon you, he will easily, almost imperceptibly, change the theme and talk of the silver-footed fairies, who, even when the latest witch has yielded to irrevocable fate, still haunt the wooded dells of Lancashire, and grace with their gentle presence her mossy glades. It is their voices which render melodious the rippling brook; it is they who give to the aspen its quivering note, to the willow its gentle wail, to the oak and the beech their merry exhilarating rustle;

they fly amain indeed before the advancing tread of the steam-engine, but he freely offers to guide any believing friend of nature to bright green nooks, unthought-of by the busy world, where they yet hold their merry revels on the moonlit sward.

Nor does his own especial inspiration leave him when called to the topics of every-day life. He does his "spiriting" most gently. If asked to contribute the usual quota to mirth—a song—he would decline; but if urged more strongly, he accedes; deprecating censure, however, as being not accustomed "to sing afore gentlefolk, nor indeed, ever, save only to wile the time a bit wi' his old woman in their lonely cabin." His voice is stentorian, his manner simple and somewhat plaintive, but his song, his own composition, is the gentlest of all appeals to his "old woman." He invites her to the homely but kindly luxuries of rural life. He'll bring her

> "fresh milk from the cow,
> Fresh butter from the churn,
> Fresh fuel from the heather mow,
> Fresh water from the burn."

If we add, that he has the most intimate and

familiar acquaintance with all the old superstitions of his native county (some of which are yet in operation), and that he has, in all kindliness, an irrepressible love at times for a little innocent mischief or bamboozling, we shall have sketched the chief points of his character, as connected with our tale.

It was in such a mood that one evening he chanced to encounter Jem Forshaw, who was returning from a tryst with Nancy Halliwell, in which she had been even more than usually pettish and ungracious.

"Well, Jem, how 's a' wi' ye, mon; how does thy courtin' prosper?"

"Bad enough, Sam; bad enough."

"I 'm sorry to hear that, mon. What is Nance skittish?"

"As an untamed colt; but that I would na' care for, iv I war sure she loved me yet."

"Why sure ye dunna doubt that."

"I dun though: she 's grown so cold o' late."

"Oh, ne'er mind that; we'll bring her round. I say, mon, ye mun gather some fern-seed."

"I 've heerd o' that afore, and thought of it;

but I say, Sam, is it really a charm, or do folk only fancy it?"

"Of course it's a charm, to be sure it is; and it 'll bring her round at once: and now I think on 't, to-night's St. John's eve; let's gang now and gather it."

Jem willingly consented: he did not observe the twinkle in his companion's eye, neither did he remark that he more than once raised his handkerchief to his mouth.

He turned aside in the direction of a thickly-wooded clough, which lay about half a mile from the place where they now were, and for a little way they walked on in silence, but once Jem's mind seemed to misgive him.

"Now you're not deceivin' me, Sam, are you? for you love mischief, I know. I 've often thought this talk of a charm were may be aw gammon."

"And what for should I deceive you, Jem?" said Sam, turning as if to go back; "on the contrary, I've left my own road to go with you."

"Oh, come on, come on, Sam; pray come on; I wasn't meaning to offend you: but is it true that spirits whisk about you when you get it?"

"True as the Gospel, mon."

"And I 've often heerd also that the ghosts of all the folk that have been buried since last Midsummer-eve rise out of their graves and walk to-night."

"That 's true, too: it 's a fearsome night is John Baptist's eve."

"Oh, then, Sam, had na' we better put it off till another night?"

"What an innocent the man is! Why, Jem, dunna ye know as it 's the night that maks the charm? The fern-seed 's no more spell in it than any other seed, except on this night: but if thy heart fails thee, turn back, mon, turn back."

"My heart doesn't fail me," said Jem resolutely: "my heart 'll never fail in aught that 'll win Nance Halliwell. That I 'm a bit afeard I dunna deny. But tell me, what must I do if the spirits come?"

"For the life of ye, ye munna speak: if thou keeps thy tongue still they canna harm thee."

"And how must I catch the seed? or will you gather it?"

"No, that would do thee no good: the charm wouldn't work if thou didn't gather it

thysel. But I will stand by thee. Thou must get a rod of witch-hazel—here's a nice bush of it here, cut one: not that, not that; it must be a forked rod—this is just the thing. Well, now we must choose a fine plant—there are some bonny ones down in the clough here, and when the moon shines right on the plant you must hold the fork of the hazel over it, but on no account shake it, but wait till the seed drops of itself into your hat, and be sure you don't lose it, for the spirits will try all they can to get it from you." *

They now went down into the clough, and Sam, after a great deal of apparent deliberation and scrutiny, pitched upon a plant suited for his purpose. He kept the most profound silence, and motioned Forshaw to do the same, and at length the moon's rays silvered the edge of the plant. He made signs to his companion, who immediately extended the forked hazel rod over it in the manner which had been explained, and stood in trembling silence for some time.

* The seed of the St. John's fern is attached to the under side of the leaf. Its minuteness may be guessed from the circumstance that one leaf is said to bear a million seeds.

Suddenly his companion nudged his elbow, still making signs of silence, and pointed to a corner of the dingle on which the moon's rays fell with surpassing brightness; but intercepting the silvery gleams were three tall gigantic forms, as black as night. Sam instantly took to his heels, and Forshaw followed, but not till the brave-hearted fellow—brave in spite of the superstitious terror which made him transform the trunks of trees into ghosts—he moved not till he had carefully taken away his hat from under the fern leaves, that hat which contained what was to win his Nancy.

He was for some time silent from terror, and his companion was also silent, from that or some other cause. At length Jem spoke.

"And now, Sam, this seed —"

"Hast got it, mon?"

"Why, sure I have. I heard it drop into the hat plain enough."

"Well, let 's look at it."

They examined the hat very carefully; but, lo! it was empty.

Jem's disappointment was extreme, and his companion seemed to sympathize with him. At length he said:

"I 'll tell thee what, Jem, it 's always a ticklish affair, and right seldom does it answer; I know that; the spirits are mighty jealous o' their fern-seed. But I say, mon, this is an awfu' night, and there 's a vast many charms on it. Hie thee home, Forshaw, hie thee home: get to bed; but first hang thy shirt on a chair afore th' fire, and leave the door ajar, and watch till midnight, and then see what comes. But whatever thou sees, Jem, dunna speak to it."

Forshaw went home, and followed the directions given him, and next morning, *accidentally*, *of course*, Sam overtook him as he was going to the mill.

"Well, Jem, did she come last night?"

"Oh, Sam! I 'm right glad to see thee. Yes, she did come. I left the door open, as you said, and she came in, not walking, for I could not hear a foot-fall, but sliding like."

"Ay; and she went to th' fire and turned thy shirt, didn't she?"

"Yes, she did; just exactly as you told me she would: but, oh, Sam! she was so pale; and she was crying, crying so sadly; and she wrung her hands, and bemoaned herself so."

"Indeed!" said Sam. "I didn't expect that."

"No, nor I neither; and I'm afeard it's a bad omen. Poor Nance! Is it a warning, Sam, d' ye think?"

"More like a dream, mon."

CHAPTER XX.

THE TRAVELLER.

"Busy rival of old Tyre,
Whose merchants princes were, whose decks were thrones."
WORDSWORTH.

It was night when Mr. Walmsley anchored in the Bay of Genoa, and perhaps that superb city is never seen to greater advantage than by moonlight; at least Frank thought that Imagination herself could not picture a more beautiful scene. The ocean was like a mass of molten silver, the moon and the stars glowed in the clear deep blue sky with a fervour which seemed to impart heat as well as brilliancy. In shore a thousand lights flashed in the water, which reflected and refracted all that were gleaming in the marble palaces, which rose tier above tier like an amphitheatre; while behind, the Apennines towered into the

sky, and borrowed silvery gleams from the glorious hosts which reigned there.

Frank quickly procured a guide, and followed him through a labyrinth of streets, which formed, in detail, a strange contrast to the magnificent whole on which he had been gazing, so squalid were they, so narrow, so filthy and confined. The houses were an enormous height, a circumstance which forms one of the most happy features of Genoa, since it insures shade to the inhabitants during the heats of summer; but our Englishman, who had as yet no practical experience of this advantage, was astonished in one street, where the houses on each side were lofty, and in themselves handsome, to have to push hastily into a gateway, in order to leave room for the passage of a laden mule. Indeed, except in the two or three principal streets, there is scarcely space in any for a carriage; and the entrance to his elegant hotel, the "Alberga della Villa," was through a narrow flagged lane, where it seemed all but impossible that a carriage could pass.

Before reaching this, however, he experienced another interruption of a sort that

awakened his English and Protestant curiosity to the utmost; this was a grand procession passing to the principal church. There was a long line of ecclesiastics in rich dresses, of varied and brilliant colours, and gorgeous with jewellery; these were accompanied by monks of various Orders, each in their appropriate costume, the simple grey or the doleful black forming a strange contrast with the showy habiliments of the priests: innumerable tapers and torches were carried, many of them by youths habited in white, and these flashing on the various jewellery displayed in the dresses, banners, and various symbols of religion which were borne along, made them glitter like fairy-things. In the centre of the procession, on a richly gilded litter, was borne the image of the Virgin, the size of life, bearing in her arms the effigy of the crucified Saviour.

The effect of this grand spectacle was heightened by the rich and solemn music by which it was accompanied, and Frank, to whom all was perfectly new, stood like one entranced, much to the astonishment of his guide, who removed his scarlet cap and bent his knee with reverence, but seemed to marvel much at the

rapt attention of the "signor." They are so perpetually recurring at Genoa, scarcely a day passing without a procession of some or other of the Orders of religion, that the inhabitants look on them much as matters of course.

Frank's daylight visions of the "city and palaces" were scarcely less gratifying and brilliant than those of the evening. The richest decorations, marble columns, friezes, statues, and arcades, mingled with elegant fountains and rich gardens, met the eye on every side. The orange too, growing unsheltered in its genial clime, with its golden fruit and pearly-hued blossom, this a kind of Aladdin's-lamp vision to an English eye, was as common as hops in Kent or apples in Herefordshire. He went early in the morning on a ramble of discovery, and quickly found himself in the flower-market, the "Covent Garden" of Genoa, where, as it seemed to him, the whole population of the city were hastening. The flowers were arranged in rows for sale in large vessels; and thither came purchasers of all sorts and descriptions, who seemed to regard them as necessaries, and to

come as regularly to procure them. Priests and monks came in numbers, and purchased large quantities, a circumstance which did not surprise Frank when, during two or three days' sojourn at Genoa, he had opportunity to observe the profusion with which they were exhibited on the altars, and in the various services of Divine worship.

On passing through the streets on his return to his hotel, Mr. Walmsley was surprised to see portable cook-shops established in most of them, and also many ranged along the quays. Many of these are for the regular supply of the lower classes with the common dishes of food; but others are of superior order, and offer a tempting supply of dainties, cutlets, capons, &c., which are cooked at the back of the shop when you want them. Thus do many very respectable persons avoid the inconvenience and discomfort of fires at home in the hot season.

Mr. Walmsley found that the gentleman to whom his mission referred, Mr. Luttrell, was at present residing at his marine villa beyond Finale, and thither our hero, after having gratified his curiosity at Genoa, pre-

pared to follow him. His course lay along the Cornice, the imperial coast-road which Buonaparte began. Everything of sublimity and beauty which can gratify the eye or fill the imagination is met with on this route from Genoa to Nice, and even in the portion of it which Walmsley traversed he met with enough to enrapture him. The everlasting Apennines were behind him, the heaving ocean with its bright blue waves on his left hand was never lost sight of long together; sometimes his mule was down on the sands, where so narrow was the track that the waves bathed the feet of the animal, and anon the patient creature would be toiling over the tremendous precipices, from which the feluccas in the water below would look like cockle-shells. Sometimes the prospect, though grand, was wild, desolate, and sterile; nothing to be seen but dark rocks cleaving the sky, and bearing on their hoar sides some dismal pines or gigantic aloes; but another turn would bring you to a village, whose white buildings gleamed amid verdant gardens, and were backed by a group of lofty palm-trees, an oriental landscape. Many were the marble villas, with their open halls and

corridors, supported by richly-carved pillars, (round which the vine would twist its rich foliage, and hang out its luscious clusters,) which seemed to rise as it were from the sea, embosomed in groves of orange, myrtle, and arbutus, which deepened and spread into wider plantations of olive, ilex, and pine. Such was Mr. Luttrell's.

Notwithstanding, however, the surpassing beauty and sublimity of his route, two or three days' fatiguing and unwonted exertion, combined with the discomforts of his nightly sojourns in a "locanda," which possibly had not near so many claims to respectability as the commonest of our public-houses, caused Frank to feel a sensation of unmixed delight when his muleteer pointed out to him his place of destination. This poor fellow had run alongside him the whole way, leading the mule over the difficult passes, broiling and sweating in the sun, as elastic as a cork and as tough as Indian-rubber, singing, chattering, and whistling, as if there were not a care in the world. Frank's English reserve was a little discomposed at first by the perfect unconcern and familiarity with which Giacomo would take a

seat by his side to discuss any questions connected with their route; but, finding this was a mere habit, and done without the slightest thought or intention of disrespect, he was quickly reconciled to it, found a most cheerful and intelligent companion in his guide, and finally made him a compliment of money above the stipulated sum, which called forth a whole torrent of benedictions on his head.

It was late at night when Frank arrived at Mr. Luttrell's palazzo; his coming had been anticipated, and his reception was cordial as he could hope. But, weary and exhausted, he could hardly feel thankful enough for that considerate kindness in his host, which led him, when he saw the young man's utter fatigue, to leave him at once to the refreshments of bath, bed, and repose.

CHAPTER XXI.

ANOTHER FAIR ONE.

" So smooth, so sweet, so silv'ry is thy voice,
As, could they hear, the damn'd would make no noise ;
But listen to thee, walking in thy chamber,
Melting melodious words to lutes of amber."

HERRICK.

MR. WALMSLEY was early astir the next morning, and roving amid lawns, terraces, and fountains, embosomed in the most luxuriant foliage, and arranged with the most exquisite taste. He thought himself in a very garden of Eden. The glowing blue sky, the soft and balmy air, heavy with the rich scents of a profusion of fruits and shrubs and flowers, which glowed with a brilliancy of colouring unknown in our colder clime, all conduced to steep his senses in delight. He roved hither and thither without object or aim, in the mere impulse

of a gratification that seemed to leave nothing to wish for. All the dreamy visions of his youth, all the poetical imaginings of past years, which the matter-of-fact cares and aspirations of ripening manhood had subdued and checked, returned upon him, and he was again the "dreaming" youth, whose fancies and imaginations had often excited the ridicule of his "work-a-day" friends. He threw himself down beneath a bower of flaunting Spanish jessamine, which flung its sweetness far and wide, while his ready memory quickly suggested to him numberless glowing descriptions in his favourite poets, which now he had the happiness—to him, for the time, it was perfect happiness—to realise in the fairy scene around him. And that no possible charm might be wanting to the spell of beauty by which he was entranced, he hears—he starts and listens —yes, he hears tones on the balmy air soft and spirit-like as those with which Ariel beguiled the shipwrecked prince. They float like the breathings of a flute around him, and then they cease. Shortly, however, they return; and fully convinced, notwithstanding their surpassing sweetness, that they are of the

earth, he moves in the direction from whence they proceed. The voice was accompanied by a guitar, touched with exquisite skill, and as the words were now distinctly audible, he paused to listen to them. Thus they ran :—

With thee I 'll climb the mountain's peak,
  With thee I 'll breast the ocean wave,
With thee the sultry desert seek,
  Or welcome e'en a foreign grave.

For thee the fairest blooms I 'll cull,
  To bind thy brow with myrtle wreath ;
For thee the luscious grape I 'll pull,
  And spread thy couch with scented heath.

Unfearing time, or chance, or change,
  Or grief, or scaith, with thee I 'll fly ;
At thy dear side for ever range,
  For thee I 'll live, with thee I 'll die !

When the song ceased, a voice as sweet in its natural tones as in its cultivated ones, said—

" What think ye, Caterina, will the English signor laugh at my pronunciation of his harsh tongue ? "

Walmsley did not wait to hear the reply : listening by stealth to a song, and listening in the same manner to a conversation, are

crimes of a very different dye and magnitude in the code of courtesy and honour. He was now separated from the songstress by a skreen of tall Peruvian aloes, which seemed to line a walk or enclosure of some length, and whose magnificent clusters of white blossoms emitted a rich odour like that of the magnolia. Passing along this lofty and magnificent skreen, he turned at the end of it into that division of the garden from which it had separated him, and another sudden turn brought abruptly to his view a very vision of Paradise.

Before him was a fountain — one of those classical and elegant things so common in Italy — an exquisitely sculptured nymph pouring the water from her urn into the finely carved basin below, both of spotless white marble. So placed as to have this refreshing object right in view, was a small temple of the same pure material, raised a step from the ground, and the roof supported by slender columns, whose silvery shafts were almost hidden in the roses, jessamines, and passion-flowers which clustered round them. Open all round, it was yet so situated as to receive considerable shade from the citrons and myrtles which grew

thickly around it, and in front, where were the fountains and borders of richly cultivated flowers, there were silk blinds between the pillars, which could be opened or closed at pleasure.

But the inmate of the bower! Half reclined amongst the cushions of a large, low ottoman, which was scarcely raised above the level of the marble floor, was a young creature, beautiful as a poet's dream in the happiest moment of inspiration. She was as fair as a lily: her complexion transparently pure; her hair almost black; her eyes large, dark, and lustrous; her lip—from just such a one did Cupid fashion his bow!—rich as the flower of the pomegranate in its roseate hue. A morning robe of thin white muslin veiled her delicate figure, and one hand lay carelessly on the lute which she had thrown aside. Her hair was plainly banded round her small head, and gathered in a knot behind. She wore no ornament of any sort; but her attendant was placing a sprig of orange blossom in her hair, just over one ear.

This attendant was a respectable, withered-looking little old woman,—very old she looked.

She was attired in handsome black silk, and round her head she wore the mazero, or scarf, with a showy border of various hues: it was fastened on the head with an enormous gold pin, and the ends hung down on the shoulders. There was no lack of ornament in the good duenna's attire. She had a gold chain round her neck of a dozen links at least, to one of which was attached a medallion, with the engraven image of a favourite saint. From another, a separate and larger chain, was suspended a massive gold crucifix. She had enormous ear-rings of the same material; and on her fore-finger a gold ring, shaped like a shield, and so large as to prevent her from bending the joint of the finger. To Frank this attire looked marvellous; but the Genoese females are accustomed to load themselves with trinkets.

It was not at this moment, however, that he noticed the peculiarities of Caterina's costume, his attention was intently and exclusively engrossed by her beautiful nursling.

She rose in some confusion at seeing the English stranger so close to her, and apparently within hearing of the conversation,

which had had reference to him. Walmsley, scarcely less confused, though from a different motive, was advancing somewhat awkwardly towards her, when both were relieved by the sudden appearance of Mr. Luttrell.

"Ah, my young friend, I have been seeking you for some time; my little Bianca seems to have been beforehand with me in doing the honours of the morning."

"No, papa, not so; but I will now assist you, if you and he please."

"Certainly, darling, we both please. I fully intend that Mr. Walmsley shall swear, on his return to England, that hospitality is not understood there, but reigns on these shores with us. Come, my love, let us to breakfast."

Mr. Luttrell was a tall hale old English gentleman, near seventy, though in appearance he was very much younger. The only symptoms of age were his whitened hair and a slight stoop; and the latter, in one of his tall, spare form, was rather ornamental than otherwise. His manners were marked by a frank courtesy, and a perfect ease, which could only be acquired by constant intercourse with good so-

ciety. This, his naturally engaging manners, joined to his prominent position at Genoa as an English merchant of the first class, had easily procured for him.

Bianca, who seemed to be the very apple of his eye, was scarcely more than sixteen. Though they addressed each other as father and daughter, she was in fact his granddaughter, orphaned in infancy.

They took breakfast in an open balcony, overhanging the sea. Numberless gay vessels, with their glistening whitewinged sails were glancing on its bright blue waters, and everything looked radiant and joyous. Some two or three hours later in the day, a feeling of oppression and languor rather took place of the animated enjoyment which now pervaded everything, and the very water itself seemed to reflect the heat of the sun instead of giving forth its own cooling breezes. When this occurred, our party retreated from the balcony; for the delight which the stranger took in the unwonted scene, and the deep interest which Mr. Luttrell felt in conversing of his native country with so intelligent a visitor as

Frank, had caused them to protract their morning meal most unconsciously.

The interior of the palazzo was gorgeous, though to an English eye there seemed a paucity of furniture, and a want of *comfort* in the general arrangements. Tables of marble and jasper, gilded cornices, gorgeous mirrors, splendid paintings, and exquisite statuary —charming as they be to look at—do yet but inaptly fill that measure of "home-delight," which we, who are accustomed to crowd round a blazing sea-coal fire, do habitually look for. However, Frank, thought not of all this, at least not now.

The saloon to which they adjourned was redolent with the perfume of the newly-gathered flowers with which it was decorated: one end opening on a lawn, was almost entirely windows of the kind we call French, which were now all wide open, but the silk blinds were closely drawn, to exclude, as far as possible, the heat, without also excluding what erratic zephyrs might wander there. Books and fruit were arranged on a marble table, evidently as the accustomed beguilement of

the midday hours, and two or three low ottomans were placed near it. The books were opened, and the fruit discussed, the flowers admired; and at length Mr. Luttrell, composing himself for his siesta, asked his "darling" if she would not sing him a song. She instantly acquiesced, and placing herself on a low cushion at his feet, tuned her guitar.

There are two ways of telling every tale. We might say that Bianca was a well-disposed, good girl, who humoured her old grandfather in his whims, and sang him to sleep. This would be strictly true; and this would be the way in which a matter-of-fact, unpoetical person might describe the "domestic scene;" but Mr. Walmsley was neither very matter-of-fact nor absolutely unpoetical, and on him the impression was very different.

It was to him the very realization of poetry and romance, the impersonation of the wildest dreams of his fancy. The magnificent scene around him, the perfect quiet and repose, the rich taste and classical elegance of all the appointments, the eastern-like glory of the

climate, the pure nature of the banquet, the fruits and the flowers; added to all this, and what to one fresh from the cotton world, was a most enchanting charm, the quiet simplicity, the total absence of parade, not merely in his gentlemanly host, but in the arrangements generally, gratified his fanciful but refined taste to the utmost.

But all this, beautiful as it was, derived its entrancing charm from the spirit of the fountain, the fairy among the flowers, the nymph of the marble temple, the young, the beautiful, and passionate Italian. Yes, as she now swept the strings of her guitar like one inspired, her large eye flashed, her cheek glowed, her lip curled, her nostril was dilated, and every highly-wrought impulse of her soul seemed to inspire the gush of melody which she poured forth from voice and instrument. An engaging writer has said, that the faces of the beautiful Italian women "remind one of a beautiful lake, on whose bosom every breeze produces a gentle ripple, and every cloud its shadow; but likewise suggests the thought of what effect a storm might cause on the same beautiful surface, the mobility

of their countenances indicating a more than ordinary predisposition to passionate emotions." Such a countenance especially was Bianca's; and Walmsley was astonished to see the storm of "passionate emotion" called forth on the hitherto sweet, composed, and even child-like countenance, from mere sympathy with the sentiments of the *scena* she was singing. "No," thought he, "the cavillers at 'Juliet' are in the wrong: here is another Juliet; and without doubt this climate, which ripens the beauty of its daughters so prematurely, and, alas! decays it so prematurely too — without doubt it has an equally precocious effect on the passions. See the proof."

And these reflections made him look on the beautiful and gifted girl with still deeper interest, as she poured forth tones

> "Which might create a soul
> Under the ribs of death,"

so sweet and yet so energetic they were. And the guitar, far from being the insignificant instrument which here we do, not without cause, consider it, seemed in her

hands the very slave of her impulses, as now she called forth its abrupt and stirring tones, and anon melted into notes of plaintive melancholy which made tears start to the eyes of the listeners. No cultivation, no "practice" could have produced such effects: Bianca was born a musician.

CHAPTER XXII.

A DOMESTIC COLLOQUY.

" Before thou reade, prepare thine eyes to weepe,
If that thine eyes containe one liquid teare :
Or if thou canst not mourne, fall dead in sleepe."
In felice Academico Ignoto.

" To you, my purse, and to none other wight,
Appeale I, for you be my lady dere."
CHAUCER.

" WELL, Jack, how dost speed wi' thy wooin,' mon."

" As well, sir, as my poor person and indifferent abilities can be supposed to speed."

" Thy poor ! — be hanged as loike. I tell thee what, Jack, thee art a confounded puppy, and a great hypocrite—thy poor person, indeed—be shot to thee."

" Much obliged, sir, for the high compliments you pay me," said Mr. John, as he

scientifically prepared another cigar for his delectation, and deliberately reposed his nether limbs in an elevated position, near the mantelpiece.

"I tell thee, I wish thee'd bring thy long limbs down, and attend to me for awhile."

"My dear sir, I was only placing my unlucky person in the way which would best enable its owner to pay the most profound attention to your paternal remarks; but there, then;" and he placed a foot on each hob, "will that accord with your notions of filial humility?"

"Thou 'rt a d—d impudent dog," said his father, laughing, "but tell me i' plain English, what does Miss Langshawe say to thee?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"Nothing."

"And what dost say to her, mon?"

"Less."

"Less — less than nothing? What dost mean? has she refused thee?"

"No."

"Hast ever offered?"

"No."

"Hast given her up?"

"No."

"Confound thee, Jack, if doesn't speak out, I'll break every bone i' th' skin. What dost mean, sir? By heaven! grand as thee thinks thysel', I'll shew thee I'm thy father, yet."

"My dear and honoured father, do not suffer your gentle spirit to be unduly excited. I'm meek and tractable as a lamb, I do assure you. With regard to Miss Langshawe, sir, the young lady — such is the perversity of human nature — seems to prefer my room to my company, therefore, I do not often visit her; and when I am in her company she seems to prefer my silence to my conversation; therefore, as I am in duty bound to consult her wishes, I do not often address her."

The father looked, as he well might, puzzled.

"I hardly know what to make o' thee, Jack; but if thou 'rt foolin' me now, it 'll be worse for thyself i' th' end. Dost really wish to have Miss Langshawe?"

"Trust me, do I: the finest girl and the

finest estate in Lancashire, are not to be sneezed at."

"Humph! Dost think thou 'rt likely to get her?"

"To be sure I do; at least, her father tells me so. But the young lady 's rather uppish, and seems to require more attention than I like to pay: it 's a pity to spoil her, and trouble doesn't suit my constitution. Besides, her father 's enamoured of me, and he tells me to be quiet, and he 'll manage her in time."

"She don't like thee, then?"

"Why, I won't go so far as to say she dislikes me; that would be too severe a censure on her taste and judgment."

"Confound thee, for a puppy!"

"Thank you, sir; but the fact is, there 's been some sort of a flirtation with that sentimental pale-faced youth, Frank Walmsley, Ainsley's nephew. Old Langshawe dismissed him with a flea in his ear, and so the young lady, for consistency's sake, must wear the willow a little."

"Who told thee all this?"

"I had it from my man, who had it from

his sweetheart, who was working in a field near the scene of the cat-as-tro-phe. So I give the lady time, for

> "It 's as well to be off with the old love,
> Before she is on with the new!"

"Well, win her and wear her, if it pleases thee. Thee might do worse—thee might, mayhap, do better. And, now, as thou 'rt reasonable, I 'll tell thee summat. Old Langshawe's welly done up."

"Done up! how do you mean? what does he want?"

"He wants the rhino, man, the ready."

"The devil!"

"True. And he wants it from me, too."

"I wish he may get it. What did you say?"

"I told him I mun consult wi' thee."

"My dear father, let me shake hands with you: I honour you."

"Ha' done with thy foolery: I were born a day or two afore thee. Now, the matter 's this. Bill Langshawe and me's old cronies, and if we were na, I wouldn't let an honest man sink for the matter of a few hundreds.

He 's had a good deal o' money from me in the last few months—"

"The deuce he has!"

"But what he wants now is a hard sum, and what indeed I couldn't raise without a ley on what I have considered to be *thy* share o' th' mill. So, thou sees, Jack, though I were willing to risk what I could to help him, I couldn't do th' whole without consulting thee."

"That 's lucky: for really, sir, I 'm at a loss to know why you should have such a feeling for Mr. Langshawe, as to sink your own property, let alone your son's — for him."

"Why, mon, dost not understand that there 'll be a fine return for it. Langshawe says this sum will pull him through; and I 'm pretty much of the same opinion mysel'—and then, mon, I 'll bet a cool hundred there 'll be cent. per cent. profit."

"Which we shall share?"

"Of course, to the amount of our loans."

"That alters the case. And the risk?"

"I 'd venture it."

"Well, if the old man would promise his

daughter's hand—we should be sure in the end of all that was to be had."

"That 's thy own share o' th' bargain—I 'se mak' no odds about it. Thou 'lt think on 't, mayhap—and thou 'lt see to th' securities?"

"I 'll see they 're right and tight, I promise you."

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